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ART. I.—*Rational Psychology; or, The Subjective Idea and Objective Law of All Intelligence.* By LAURENS P. HICKOK, D. D., Union College. A New and Revised Edition. New York: Ivison, Phinney & Co. 1861.

WE avail ourselves of the appearance of a new edition of this work, to give it an examination correspondent to its own extraordinary claims, and the laudations of its admirers.

The author informs us that in this edition "some modifications have been made of particular parts, but not in the general method. This had been too comprehensively thought out to admit of any change." He also informs us that "It is given in this revised form from the conviction that its use is still needed to the same ends, and especially as a text or reference book in the higher philosophical instruction of our colleges." To the "complaint of obscurity from peculiarity of style and of terms," made against the first edition, the author replies that this "arises from the nature of the speculation, and nothing but more familiarity with this field of thinking can make any presentation by language to be perspicuous." He adds that, "To the familiar mind the work is not open to the criticism of obscurity, either from the style or the terminology." He

- ART. III.—1. *The Problem Solved; or, Sin not of God.* By MILES P. SQUIER, D. D., Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Beloit College. New York: M. W. Dodd. 1855.
2. *Reason and the Bible; or, The Truth of Religion.* By MILES P. SQUIER, D. D., Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, Beloit College. New York: Charles Scribner. 1861.
3. *The Hartford Ordination.* Letters of the Rev. Drs. Hawes, Spring, and Vermilye, and the Rev. Messrs. Childs and Parker; republished from the *New York Observer*; with Notes and a Review; to which is added a Statement of the Manchester Case. Second Edition. Hartford, Connecticut: Alexander Calhoun & Co. 1860.
4. *Sermon* by the Rev. HENRY WARD BEECHER, published in the *New York Independent*, of July 4th, 1861.

IN presenting the foregoing works as exhibiting some of the advanced phases of Rationalism in the evangelical communions of our country, we have placed them in a logical, rather than a strict chronological order, although the two are mostly coincident. By this, we mean the order in which the principles advanced become premises for other principles which flow logically as conclusions from them. The first of these works is placed there, not for its recency, but merely as being in some degree exegetical of the second. The opinions and speculations which appear in these several works, however otherwise various, have a bond of unity in this, that they are more or less rationalistic, and relate primarily to sin, either in its origin, nature, punishment, or expiation.

Dr. Squier is in a state of exuberant and enviable satisfaction. He luxuriates in the sublime consciousness of having solved "the problem" of evil, which has confounded the great thinkers of christendom and heathendom through the ages; and of having looked through the "clouds and darkness" which have hitherto wrapt many of the Divine counsels and administrations in inscrutable mystery from the mightiest and devoutest minds. And since he appears quite unconscious that he is not

the inventor of his great solution, he intensifies the pleasures of comprehending the mysteries of God's providential government, by the higher ecstasies of original discovery,—“the rapturous eureka.”

It is to be regretted that Dr. Squier should have thwarted his benevolent desire to make others share his delight in the premises, by an ostentatious swell and glitter of style, quite unaccountable in a writer of his age and antecedents. His passion for ambitious and inflated diction often betrays him into feebleness, obscurity, and magniloquent barbarisms. We do not often stop for mere word-criticism. That a writer merely offends our taste in these things is a small matter. But it is a duty which no loyal citizen of the realm of letters may rightfully evade, to arraign flagrant violations of the English language. What can justify such phrase as the following?—“Any strategic leanings to wrong, as a Divine expedient in the original and integral methods of the universe, is utter ungodlike and inconceivable.” Why say “it will be resultant in retribution,” for “it will result in retribution,”—a form of expression constantly recurring? What does he mean by telling us that no “good being can stand in any propositional relation to sin?” This use of the word “propositional” is as frequent as it is false to those who know the meaning of the word, and senseless to those who do not. “Sin is a mistake as well as a *mislead*.” “Sin will occur, if at all, in the *instep* of a moral economy.” “Intelligence is a unity, and so is truth. The subject-personality and the subject-matter in the premises possess this generic quality, and indicate the strength of our position, that the study of man and of truth,—of him who thinks, and of that which is thought, and is the objective basis of it in the one universe which God has formed; gives direction and homogeneity to the results to which on reflection we come?” “In the first nestlings of ‘the me’ within us—in the first act or instance of consciousness, we get the validity of the Infinite,—the Absolute,—the Eternal—the Jehovah—and comprehend the necessary being of God.” Quite an achievement for the “first nestlings of the me,” which, whether they accomplish all this or not, have plainly launched the author on a philosophic sea whose abysmal depths and fatal under-currents he has yet

to learn. But, be this as it may, if we cannot have choice phrase without pedantic barbarisms, or something worse, by all means let us have common-place and even vulgar language, so that it be simple, clear, and unaffected. Many more passages might be selected from the author's two works, which show how they who rise on stilts to sublimity of expression are less than a step from the ridiculous. Dr. Squier asks, (*Problem Solved*, p. 158; our previous quotations are from his later volume): "May one be on both sides of a moral question, and be both proponent and repellent in the same moral issue?" Is this English, or is it—what? And what is meant by such ponderous verbiage as the following: "It is like a truncated cone mourning for its counterpart. It is a truth in its orphanage and without its parallelisms, and coincidences and reciprocations in all correlated truth, and in its solitude unintelligible, deceptive, objectless." *Id.* p. 224. What is meant by "the imperatives of right action in the soul as adjutant with Him in correcting and overcoming all that is wrong, and against it, and in the promotion of all that is right everywhere, and in accordance with His will." Surely Dr. Squier ought not to repel the readers whose sympathy he seeks with such jargon. It is too much to give us the stiff technics of Dr. Hickok without his depth, or the formidable verbosity of Dr. S. H. Cox, without his brilliancy. If we must have the contortions, let us also have the inspiration.

We pass briefly to consider the principles in the author's late work, only referring to the other as it may be explicatory of this. We notice them, not on account of any ability or novelty which characterize them, but on account of the boldness with which they are advanced, and the consequences to which they lead; which we propose to show are already developing themselves.

Dr. Squier undertakes to demonstrate the harmony of the doctrines of the Bible with the dictates of human reason: not merely that many of them accord with the natural judgments of the human mind, while it has the strongest reason for receiving all the residue upon the testimony of the infallible God; but that they are all in such a sense rational that the human mind can see the grounds of their truth, and why they

are certified to be true by the Omniscient God; that they contain nothing insoluble to human reason, or whose points of contact and conciliation with other known truths cannot be shown; that all doctrines of the Bible are to be explicated into conformity to these conditions; and that whatever cannot be shaped to this pattern must be rejected as impossible to be true, and therefore impossible to be taught in the word of God. But we will let our author speak for himself:

“Philosophy, then, embraces the sphere of religion, both natural and revealed. It shall desecrate in its principles what is possible in Divine revelation, and what is not. Solecism and absurdity cannot be in it. It will be on the basis of necessary truth, and be verified and justified by it. It will be the offspring of God, and commend itself to reason and common sense. It will be the God of nature and providence seen in the statements of an express revelation. It will be the further exhibition of the one God of the universe, and be a homogeneous manifestation. Its statements falling in with the terms of all necessary truth, reason will see and approve them. And thus philosophy has the same jurisdiction here as in the other works and manifestations of God. . . . she ascertains their economy, and justifies it to all truth and intelligence. The reason will take this prerogative, and it is deferred to and acknowledged in all exegesis of the word of God,—in all commendations of it, and all voluntary and responsible issues based upon it.” *Reason and the Bible*, pp. 264, 265.

Again:

“Truth is not such by prescription. It may have an authoritative statement, as it has in the Bible, but this is only a *mode* of it and of its manifestation. It must be *truth*, or it could not be so *stated*. And this inherence of truth in the nature and fitness of things, and this reason for its authoritative statement which is found in its intrinsic verity and value, is what cultivated intellect demands—and is what society and the world *will* demand and *must* have. It is too what religion can and ought to give.” *Id.* pp. 294, 295.

These are but the weaker tentative flights of our author. Before, however, introducing our readers to his loftier soarings, we have a suggestion or two to offer, with a view to a final dis-

posal of much of the irrelevant reasoning which constitutes the staple of the book, by indicating the real state of the question.

1. It is not claimed, as Dr. Squier seems to intimate in regard to his antagonists, that "solecism and absurdity" can be in the word and truth of God. But it is claimed that Dr. Squier's mind is not the ultimate infallible oracle which is authorized to pronounce that a "solecism and an absurdity" that has not been perceived to be such by the great mass of God's people, of all ages and countries. It is claimed still further, that we have no warrant to conclude any clear averment of the word of God absurd, because, in our apprehension it appears so. If it be clearly affirmed by the testimony of God, it is our duty to conclude that all supposed absurdities in it are due to our inadequate and short-sighted conception of it, and that they will disappear before a fuller comprehension of it, when that shall be vouchsafed, whether in this world or the next. Surely in these matters "the foolishness of God is wiser than man." "He will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Have not all the doctrines of grace been repudiated by vast numbers, on the ground of their alleged incongruity with reason, or, what is of the same force and effect, their feelings? Have those ceased to live who repeat the old cavil against gratuitous justification by the blood and righteousness of Christ, "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and insist that it tends to licentiousness? Have those ceased from the earth, who echo the questions in regard to the regeneration of the human soul by the Holy Ghost, even in the extreme dilution of the doctrine as put by the school to which Dr. Squier belongs, "How can these things be"? "Are they not at war with sense and reason"? Did our Saviour, therefore, explain them into accordance with Nicodemus's "reason and common sense"? And is the doctrine of spiritual regeneration to be surrendered at discretion, because it cannot be explained to harmonize with the thinking and feeling of some worms of the dust? What fearful maledictions have men as brilliant and fascinating as Channing and Bushnell hurled at the doctrine of vicarious atonement, in every conceivable view of it, which does not turn it into a "pious fraud," as revolting to all right

reason and feeling? As making the cross "the great central gallows of the universe," or as "involving in God the loss or confusion of all moral distinctions?" Is that which is the "wisdom of God and the power of God" to be forthwith renounced, at the call of such parties and the multitudes they represent?

The only case in which human reason is authorized to assert that a given doctrine cannot be taught in Scripture, is when it involves a contradiction, *i. e.*, asserts that a thing is, and is not, at the same moment; or, what is the same, asserts the contradictory of some truth *certainly* and *indisputably* known. It is, of course, impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same moment. But let the condition be observed. The contradictory of the supposed scriptural statement must be *certainly* and *indisputably* known. If it be at all in dispute, this condition fails. The application of this *judicium contradictionis*, which has been allowed by all standard theologians, is, however, subject to this limitation. The contradiction must not only be clear and indisputable, but, if the doctrine supposed to contain it be clearly asserted in Scripture, we must not forthwith reject it, or insist that it be interpreted or philosophized out of Scripture. It is more likely that we misconceive it, and that when we come duly to apprehend it, the contradiction will vanish. How many have been bewildered by what seemed to them contradictions in the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation—that three are one, and that two are one? How many Socinians have rejected these doctrines on the assurance that they contained obvious contradictions? But how clearly are these seeming contradictions eliminated, when it is seen that God is one substance in three Persons, and that Christ is one Person in two natures? We allude to these instances for the purpose of showing the extreme caution, with which any reverent mind will allow even seeming contradictions to overbear or rule out the obvious meaning of Scripture. What then is to be said of those who exclude all mysteries from Scripture, and refuse to accept any doctrine apparently taught there until they have rationalized all mystery out of it, and reduced it to the comprehension of reason and common sense?

2. According to Dr. Squier, reason has "jurisdiction" over "all exegesis of the word of God," to strain it into accord with its own decisions. This is the boldest and most unqualified rationalism. Even an "authoritative statement" by the All-wise God is not sufficient, unless the "reason" for it "in the nature and fitness of things" is shown to meet the "demand of cultivated intellects." It would not be easy to go further. Is this taking the yoke and learning of Christ? Is this becoming fools that we may be wise? Is this proper instruction to give to the natural man, who receiveth not, neither can receive the things of the Spirit? And can this nourish that faith which stands "not in the wisdom of men, but the power of God?"

3. The fact that the Bible teaches what commends itself to reason and common sense, which Dr. Squier labours through many weary chapters to show, is no proof that it does not also teach mysteries, even the great mystery of "godliness," which is in some aspects infinitely above the utmost stretch of comprehension by reason and common sense. Nor does the fact that all its truths harmonize with intrinsic reason, prove that they are now so set forth in the Scripture, as to be fully intelligible or explicable to the human reason in its present compass. Nor does the fact that God's methods of administration in nature, providence, and grace are mutually consistent with each other, because consistent with the One Supreme Reason, prove that this consistency, in all the methods and modes thereof, can now be explicated to the human understanding. We know, *a priori*, that harmony must exist between all God's procedures and administrations. But it does not follow that we can see the points of contact between many truths which we are compelled to admit. To insist on such a condition of the acceptance of truth, is really to undermine the possibility of faith, and erect in its place the fabric of unmitigated skepticism. It is to deny that we now know only in part, and assert that a finite mind can fully span the infinite. An iron ship will swim, and an iron anchor sink. Is this not to be believed, on the testimony of the senses, by children, or was it not to be believed by the world in its childhood, because they have not, or had not, found out the law of nature which explains

how these two facts are mutually consistent? Can a finite mind take in all those reasons and grounds of procedure that open themselves to the mind of God through eternity and immensity? And yet, unless this is so, all Dr. Squier's arguments to prove that God's procedures and manifestations in nature and revelation are reasonable and harmonious, are aside of the issue. And, in order to prove his point, he must show that we are never to walk by faith in contrast with sight; but that we see through everything which we are required to believe. From his unceasing and embittered assaults on a faith in any sense "blind and sightless," as well as from other evidence which we shall now adduce, we judge that Dr. Squier does not shrink from this abyss, but rather glories in leaping into it;—with all respect we must say, not knowing what he does.

He refers his readers to his chapters on the "Advantages of the Philosophic Method," and on "Moral Evil," as deserving of special consideration. In the former of these, we find a feeble and confused echo of Dr. Hickok, with an occasional dash from Cousin. He tells us:

"We gain the infallible ideas or first truths of reason. We seek the *rationale* of being, and comprehend the possible idea as well as objective law of knowledge and truth. *This is philosophy.* It takes cognizance of all, . . . and gains the *possible* as well as the actual of being. . . . It regards all truth, and would give the law of it. It embraces the three categories of truth—the *finite*, the *infinite*, and the *relations* between them." Pp. 256, 257.

"Philosophy then *comprehends the law of the infinite*, and asserts the indispensable and necessary perfections of God, and finds itself verified in the oral statements of the revelation which he has given. Philosophy embraces the finite also, and analyzes its contents and characteristics. It gives the sphere of the finite, *and shows what it can and cannot contain.*" P. 259.

This is evidently Dr. Hickok's "subjective idea and objective law of all intelligence," and of all being, even of that "law of the Infinite," which conditions his working, and determines all the possibilities of knowing and being, with an

attempt to adjust it to the key-note of Cousin's Philosophy. The whole culminates in the following grand climacteric:

"With the being and perfections of God, we infallibly get the principles of all necessary truth. From that central element radiate all the relations between the infinite and finite—between God and all else, and we have the economy of the physical and moral universe." Pp. 270, 271.

Somewhat of an achievement for creatures of yesterday who know nothing. The only comment we have to offer on such a pretension to penetrate the clouds and darkness which veil the Most High, shall be in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

"For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen." Rom. xi. 33—36.

No wonder that, after this, he signifies his amazement at the difficulties which "such men as Chalmers, and Barnes, and Stuart, and Hodge, in the present, not to refer to the scholars of past time," have encountered in interpreting Romans vii., and other passages. Such difficulties have no existence for one who flatters himself that he can "comprehend the possible idea and objective law of all knowledge and truth." An ignorant navigator sees no perils where the intelligent helmsman is on his guard against shoals and breakers, and

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

The great problem which Dr. Squier claims to have solved, is that of accounting for the existence of moral evil. In lieu of what he somewhere calls the "old view," as if his own were a new discovery or solution, he offers the familiar theory which has been debated by polemics of all generations, but in this age and country has been most prominently associated with the name of Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor. It was one of the two or three cardinal principles of what was known as "Taylorism," and which at length excited so general and decisive a repug-

nance to what was called New Divinity. This solution is, in brief, as follows: that moral agency involves a power of choice and contrary choice which may act either way "despite all opposing power;" that nothing can be sinful, or holy, or invested with moral quality, which is not the act, or the effect of the act of such a power; that, in consequence, the existence of moral agents and moral government, implies the possibility of their sinning, beyond the power of God to hinder it; that if moral agents choose to sin, and thus introduce moral evil into a moral kingdom, it is impossible to prevent it, without destroying their moral agency, and thus the very possibility of sin, holiness, and moral government. We have no space to quote, but we refer for proof that this is Dr. Squier's solution, specially to pages 325, 326, of the chapter on Moral Evil in his *Reason and the Bible*, and generally, to all that he has written on the subject. In reference to this whole matter, we simply observe:

1. That none of his writings throw any new light on the subject. It is simply amazing that one who has had so much to do with the church controversies of the last thirty years, should suppose that anything contained in either of these volumes entitles either of them to be called, in reference to this great mystery of the origin of evil, "The Problem Solved," or to be regarded as a discovery or new contribution to the solution of the problem.

2. He does not even appear to apprehend the difficulties of the question, or to notice many of the unanswerable objections that have so often been offered to his theory. This theory undermines the Divine decrees, and consequent foreknowledge, sovereignty, providence, election, the conservation of saints and angels in holiness and blessedness—in short, the stability of heaven itself. This liability of moral agents to sin, it is maintained, suppose what else you will, continues while moral agency continues. It may therefore subvert every plan, purpose, and arrangement of the Infinite God. It shadows with uncertainty every hope of salvation, and makes the pillars of heaven and the throne of God to tremble. It is in express contradiction to the word of God, which teaches that God doeth all things after the counsel of his own will, and that the hearts

of men are in his hands. It is contradicted by every prayer for renewing and sanctifying grace, for the conversion of others, for the spread of God's kingdom, and the gracious administration of his universal providence. In truth, this system logically divests God of his supremacy, which is virtually to ungod the universe and reduce it to helpless orphanage. The only guarantee that Dr. Squier can give us against such a catastrophe is, that "the unfallen universe will become too wise and confirmed in virtue for it, (sin,) and so get beyond the actual liability of it." We are afraid, if God's kingdom has no better security than this, it must reel to destruction. He tells us, "God did not decree the envy of Joseph's brethren, nor the malice and wickedness of the Jews" (when they crucified Christ.) "God no more purposed their agency in the matter, than they his. The event which was resultant of their wickedness, he turns to account, as he is wont to do in such contingencies,—the wickedness itself was in no sense of him."

This betrays a singular confusion of ideas, and is a direct contradiction of Scripture, which asserts, in regard to Joseph's brethren, that what they meant for evil "God MEANT for good;" and that the crucifiers of Christ did what God's "hand and counsel determined before should be done." "The wickedness was in no sense of Him," yet he chose not to prevent it, on account of the good he could educe from it. He MEANT it for good. How monstrous to pretend that events which, in themselves and their causes, lie at the very head-spring of the whole Divine administrations in the kingdoms of providence and grace, are in no sense purposed of God, or included in his plan! Let those consider this an escape from mystery who will; but it is an escape into absurdity and impiety. If such permission or non-prevention of sin is what Dr. Squier so strenuously protests against, as involving on the part of God what he calls a "strategic correlation to sin," so be it. Of course, this system limits all sin and holiness to acts ("a purpose," Dr. Squier somewhere says.) He expressly denies that it is any part of the office of the Holy Spirit to furnish a "supply of power" to lost and helpless man in securing "right affections and action in the soul." What, then, is his office? Or what statement could be in more direct contradiction to the

Bible, the creeds of Christendom, and the prayers of the people of God? We might multiply quotations indefinitely of like crudities, theologic, philosophic, and rationalistic. But we desist, and proceed to Mr. Childs's pamphlet, which reveals another stage of rationalistic progress, arising from the attempt to bring down all Christian doctrine to the level of each man's reason, common sense, feeling, or "sense of honour and right."

*Mr. Childs's Pamphlet.*

This production, which we are glad to see has reached a second edition, both on account of its ability and the great moment of the matters treated in it, gives us the main facts in regard to two recent ordinations and installations of pastors over two prominent Congregational churches in Connecticut—one the South Church in Hartford, of which the Rev. Dr. Walter Clark had for many years been pastor; the other the church in Manchester, a rural village in the vicinity of that city.

On the eleventh day of January, 1860, Mr. Edwin Pond Parker was ordained and installed pastor of the former of these churches. He was a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary, and had been recommended as "sound in theology" by the Rev. Dr. Pond, Professor in that Institution. The ecclesiastical council by which he was installed was, according to Congregational usage, selected by the church, *pro re nata*, and expired with the occasion which gave it birth. It consisted, of course, of the pastors and delegates of such churches as the church in question was pleased to select for the emergency. It contained, however, some members of high position and of great weight of character and influence. Among them were the Rev. Dr. Vermilye, Professor of Theology in East Windsor Seminary, Rev. Dr. Harris, Professor of Theology in Bangor, and father-in-law of the candidate, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Spring, Trustee of East Windsor Theological Seminary, and the Rev. Dr. Hawes, Trustee of Yale College and Theological Seminary. The examination was public, and continued for some hours. What openly transpired there was the property of the public. To prevent all misapprehension, however, it is proper to say here, that Dr. Vermilye of East

Windsor, alone, of the whole council, voted against sustaining the examination of Mr. Parker.

The Rev. Thomas S. Childs, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Hartford, was present at this examination, and took careful notes of the hinge questions and answers. He soon sent a letter, giving a brief account of it, to a friend, who forwarded it to the *New York Observer* and one or two other journals for publication. What immediately follows will not be wholly new to that numerous class of our readers who are also readers of the *Observer*. In this letter it is declared that

“He rejected emphatically the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. He was not clear on the Trinity, doubted as to the use of the word *Person*, and stated that the unity of God meant one personality.

“All sin and holiness were affirmed by him to be voluntary. God has no holy nature. Man has no sinful nature. Every man has ability (in the sense of “adequate power”) to fulfil the commands of God, even to sinless perfection in the present life.

: “The gospel is not absolutely necessary to the salvation of adult heathen. Some are undoubtedly saved without it. God will give all men a fair chance, and Christ died with the same design for all. Hence if all men have not had a *fair chance* in this life, they will have it after death. The candidate stated openly, that he inclined to the belief that after death, and before the final judgment, there was a state (Hades) for all souls—where some who had died impenitent—some even who had rejected Christ in this life—would have a new offer of Christ and salvation, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be saved: so that if called to the death-bed of an impenitent sinner, and knowing that he had but a short definite time to live, he would not shut him up to faith in Christ within that time, or final ruin.

“These views were in direct conflict with the articles of the Church, to which every private member is required to give his assent. Yet they were not regarded by the council as a disqualification for the pastorate.” P. 6.

To which the *Observer* appended the following testimony,

with the accompanying appropriate and indisputable comment. "It is in harmony with what we hear from various quarters. The fact that a respectable number of ministers in any part of the country would consent to induct such a teacher as this candidate into the ministry, to preach such another gospel as the above, is enough to fill with painful apprehension the mind of every Christian who believes the truths there denied to be essential to the integrity of the gospel of Christ."

This brought a prompt rejoinder into the columns of the *Observer*, over the signature of Drs. Hawes and Spring, in which they pronounced the letter of Mr. Childs a "succession of misrepresentations, exaggerations, suppressions, and falsities;" the *Observer's* "sources of information strangely corrupt;" Mr. Parker "maligned;" the ministers implicated "calumniated and aggrieved." "The wail of sorrow which arises from your correspondent at the imagined apostasies of Connecticut churches is so dolorously *soloistic* as to sound very ludicrously about here!" One of them, in a communication to the *Presbyterian Expositor*, declared Mr. Childs's representation "wholly at variance with the truth; that he either stolidly misapprehended, or wilfully misrepresented his (Mr. Parker's) views." How did they vindicate Mr. Parker's orthodoxy, and these severe accusations against Mr. Childs? Their main proofs appear to consist of quotations from a creed read by Mr. Parker to the council, touching the points in question. We prefer to let him speak for himself, where his defenders quote him in order to prove what they call his "manly and frank way of stating the truth." Say Messrs. Hawes and Spring:

"The first charge refers to 'Inspiration.' 'He denied emphatically the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.' This implies that the candidate held such views as would invalidate the authority of Scripture. Hear his creed:

"The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament \* \* \* were written by men inspired of the Holy Ghost. They are a *unit*—a body—of which the various books are the members; each book has a polarity towards the cross of Christ; hence *all* this Scripture is inspired. It is the "word of God." While the Logos is the Revealer and the Revelation, the Holy Ghost is

the distinctive inspiring Power, enabling the sacred penman to give an adequate expression of the truth, whether revealed to them, naturally apprehended by them, or simply communicated through them.'

"Whether this implies verbal inspiration or not, it contains all that is necessary to make the Scriptures a complete and authoritative rule of faith."

As it is conceded on all hands that he denied verbal inspiration, Mr. Childs is fully vindicated on this head. And if any language can indicate the dreamy, unauthoritative pseudo-inspiration of modern mystico-transcendentalism, which leaves every one at liberty to accept as much or as little of the Bible as he pleases, it is surely done in the foregoing article of faith. What is "an adequate expression of the truth?" One in which all the words are written by Divine guidance? or one in which much of this language is to be explained away as an uninspired, and therefore unsatisfactory and unreliable statement of the mind of God?

The next article of his creed offered, is upon the Trinity, as follows:

"I believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. I believe in only one God. (Art. I.) Christ is the God-human, the humiliation of the eternal Logos. The *proof* of this doctrine is found only in the Bible. It is a *rational* doctrine; and was chiefly held in the apostolic and patriarchal church. I believe in the divinity of the Holy Ghost."

This does not disprove any statement of Mr. Childs. It is far enough from proving its author sound on the Trinity. It contains language which awakens a contrary apprehension. We should look for some of these phrases from an erratic or ignorant, not from an intelligent, orthodox divine. It is clearly and incontrovertibly proved that he did, in his examination, declare the unity of God to mean "one personality," which is no more than we should expect from the confessor of such a creed as the foregoing. Dr. Harris, his father-in-law, offers the following analysis of the subject, which only relieves Mr. Parker by betraying his own inexplicable confusion of mind in the premises. "What he said of the term *persons* was the statement, familiar, I had supposed to all theologians, that

the term *person* is not applied to the distinctions of the Trinity in the full ordinary sense; that God is not one person in the same sense in which he is three persons." We submit that this proves not only Mr. Parker, but Dr. Harris, "not clear on the trinity"; and as to the proper "use of the word person," Mr. Childs is fully sustained on this point.

In regard to ability, a holy and sinful nature, the salvation of the heathen, Mr. Childs is fully borne out in his statements by the following article of Mr. Parker's creed, and by Messrs. Hawes and Spring's comments on it, as follows:

"*Psychologically*, I believe holiness is the supreme choice of the mind, by which the person is devoted to the *universal*, rather than to his individual interests and good. I believe that *by nature*, men are sinners. That such is the corruption of the soul, that each person, obeying the influence of the depraved appetite and desires, will sin so soon as he comes to act consciously of the right and wrong. I do not believe that man is blameworthy, either for his nature or its hereditary corruption." Say Messrs. Hawes and Spring, "Who does believe so? or who can believe otherwise than this article expresses?\*" The next thing charged is this—"The gospel is not actually necessary to the salvation of adult heathen." The candidate said no such thing. He explicitly stated, "there is *no salvation* without Christ!" He believed that some heathen, as some other persons who have never heard of Christ, may be renewed and saved through him, or on account of what he has done: but '*all by Christ!*' This is no new doctrine, nor is it any heresy. Watts, Emmons, Dwight, and other theologians held it, and it is taught in several confessions of faith adopted by the Reformed Church—the Presbyterian Church, and others."†

\* Their letter in the *Recorder* contains the following in addition: "As to what the letter charges, that the candidate holds that every man has ability in the sense of 'adequate power' to fulfil the commands of God"—let that speak for itself. It is accounted no deadly heresy, at least in this part of the country, to hold that man has power to do what God commands him to do; or, that he cannot be justly blamed or punished for not doing impossibilities."

† For a direct contradiction of this statement, see Larger Catechism, question 60: "They who having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not on him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion they profess."

This proves not that Mr. Parker is sound in regard to ability, original sin and righteousness, the salvation of the heathen, &c., but that his case is only one in a wide-spread and serious defection from the truth of God in relation to this class of subjects.

We come now to the crucial point. We call it so, not because enough of looseness and latitudinarianism has not already been shown, but because the discussions upon this case have chiefly centred upon this, as quite the most novel and startling of Mr. Parker's doctrinal outgivings. We refer to the future condition and opportunities of those who die in impenitence. In fact, this is the only point regarding which there has been any serious dispute as to the creed of the candidate. And this now appears to be placed beyond all doubt. Mr. Childs, corroborated by Dr. Vermilye, "as to all essential particulars," confirms his original charge by the following explicit testimony and cogent arguments.

"7. We now come to the 'crisis'\*—Mr. Parker's views of the future state. And we shall meet the whole matter by a simple statement of facts which we stand ready to verify before any tribunal.

(1.) The germ of his views was *in his written creed*. Why did not Drs. Hawes and Spring ask us to 'hear his creed' on this point?

(2.) After an examination upon the subject which had gone on to weariness, with questions and cross questions, with explanations and counter explanations, the candidate did say frankly and explicitly, 'I wish to conceal nothing; *I will state my position upon this whole subject*. I INCLINE TO THE BELIEF that there is after death a state (Hades) for all souls, good and bad, where the good are happy, and where some who have died impenitent may have a chance of salvation,' &c. In reply to inquiries, he stated that he supposed this salvation would be in connection with the means of grace—the offer of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

(3.) He not only stated it; he argued it; feebly and doubt-

\* This was the word used by Mr. Parker in his creed, to denote that point of time beyond the grave, up to which he was understood as entertaining hope for some who died impenitent.

fully indeed, but he argued it. He said he thought there were passages of Scripture which pointed to such a state, *e.g.*, 'Christ preached to the spirits in prison.'

(4.) He not only argued it, he called upon the Council to prove that the doctrine was not true. 'Will any one quote to me a scriptural proof against this view?'

(5.) When asked to reconcile his doctrine with the articles of the church over which he was about to be installed, and which articles affirm that men are to be judged 'according to the deeds done in the body,' he replied that he should not interpret the 'deeds done in the body,' as referring strictly to the present life.

(6.) He applied his theory, not merely to some who 'had never heard of Christ,' but to those who had heard and died unbelieving. Surely the gentlemen cannot have forgotten the case so solemnly put and so unequivocally answered: 'Suppose, sir, you were called to the death-bed of an impenitent man, and knew that he had but ten minutes to live; would you tell him that he must repent and believe in Christ within that time or be lost?'

(Ans.) "I would not." P. 17.

Drs. Hawes and Spring, in a reply designed to parry the foregoing evidence, and, if possible, defend Mr. Parker by inculcating Mr. Childs, though in a somewhat chastened tone, as compared with their original communication, say,

"We well remember, and the Council will remember, that Mr. Parker presented in defence of his possible theory, the supposition of a youth educated in all the ignorance and crime of the "Five Points," who had never heard of the way of salvation, and yet in whose moral sensibilities there might still remain some ground for the hope that if Christ were understandingly proposed to him he would accept the Saviour. Such an one he *would not* shut up conclusively to present faith in Christ or final perdition. We do not defend or approve his views. They are repulsive to our moral sense. We had rather leave such a case where the Scriptures have left it. The judge of all the earth will do right. We only state the facts as they can easily be recalled by every member of the Council."

The fact here stated, not the comments upon it, is also wit-

nessed by Dr. Harris, and Mr. Parker himself, in a communication deformed by some feeble and flippant thrusts at Messrs. Childs and Vermilye. Thus the original allegations of Mr. Childs in regard to the doctrinal aberrations displayed by this candidate are unanswerably sustained. It is with no pleasure that we find ourselves constrained to this conclusion. For the sake of evangelical truth and piety, it would be far more grateful to believe that Mr. Childs was bewildered by some misunderstanding or unaccountable hallucination.

We reserve the comments which these facts suggest, till we shall have brought before our readers a succinct account of the Manchester ordination, which quickly followed that in Hartford.

On May 31, 1860, a Council, called by invitation of the Congregational church in Manchester, Connecticut, for the purpose of ordaining and installing Mr. L. M. Dorman as pastor of that church, proceeded to examine him with reference thereto. The Council, of which the venerable Dr. Calhoun was a member, contained representatives of the two schools of New England Theology. They unanimously refused to proceed to the ordination of the candidate, on account of the lax views, as disclosed by the examination, which he entertained "on inspiration, election, depravity, and, above all, probation after death."

Immediately the church invited another Council, which convened a week afterwards, and included only two ministers who were members of the first. One of these two ministers thus excepted, had signalized himself by the publication of an able defence of Dr. Bushnell, when his case was the subject of vehement controversy. In each Council it is understood that he voted against the candidate; and, as we have been informed, was quite surprised to find Dr. Hawes, who, in the former controversy was arrayed against him in behalf of orthodoxy, now arrayed against him in protecting a laxity of doctrine which he dared not sanction. For of this second Council, it is not surprising that Drs. Hawes, Spring, and Mr. Parker, after the part they had so recently enacted at Hartford, were leading members. The following reports of his examination were published soon afterwards, without question of their accuracy, as

is stated, from any quarter. In addition to these, another painfully significant statement was published, and, so far as we are advised, uncontradicted, in connection with the reports and discussions to which it gave rise.

“One of the correspondents of the *Recorder* states, that at the examination of Mr. Dorman, ‘a member of the Manchester church expressed his concern at finding that certain young preachers hold that salvation will be offered to some who die impenitent.’ ‘A theological student’ with whom he was conversing, ‘assured him that most of his associates in professional study adopted that opinion.’ The correspondent asks with point, ‘Is this one of the signs of the times?’ ”

Says one reporter in the *Boston Recorder*: “The Moderator and his associates were not a little troubled to ascertain what Mr. Dorman believed on some important points, and some of them were still more troubled by his explicit avowals on other points.

“On the question whether the gospel will be offered to any of the human race in the future world who die impenitent, the candidate was more reserved than when before the first Council, but there was no retraction or essential modification of the views then expressed. He admitted no connection between Adam’s sin and the sin and ruin of his posterity, except what he was pleased to state thus:—‘Adam set a very bad example.’ The Bible was written only in part by inspiration of God. By *election* we are to understand simply, that God fore-saw who would accept the gospel, and them he determined to save. He thought it probable, and after much questioning he was almost confident, that all true believers will persevere in holiness and be finally saved. On the doctrine of divine decrees the answers were so singular that Dr. Hawes referred the candidate to his license, which certified his assent to the creed of the Presbyterian church. But he declined giving his assent, at Manchester, to the doctrine in question as laid down in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. The Moderator then produced the creed of the church over which it was proposed to ordain him. He was understood to dissent positively from the Manchester Confession, also, respecting the decrees of God.”

“Rev. Mr. Oviatt, who was certainly not unfriendly to Mr. Dorman or the Council, says:

“ ‘During the early part of the examination, Mr. Dorman appeared tolerably well; during the latter part, far otherwise. To many of the leading questions, his answers were very equivocal, certainly ‘non-committal.’ I remember distinctly the questions I put to him, and his answers thereto, almost word for word. I will give them in substance, and nearly verbatim, without the quotation marks. What is election? Answer.—I suppose God’s choosing some. Why does God choose some? Answer.—I cannot tell. I sometimes lean to opinion that God chooses some for reasons best known to himself, and sometimes I lean to the opinion that God chooses whom he does, because he foresees that they will repent and believe in Christ; and and therefore he elects them. I read the article in the ‘Confession of Faith’ of the church in Manchester, on election, and asked the candidate how he would expound it in a sermon, should his people request him to preach on this doctrine. Answer.—I don’t know; I am studying the Bible to find out. With regard to probation, I asked him, do you or do you not believe that the probation of all men ends at death? Answer.—I cannot tell. God will give all men a fair chance. Faith in Christ is necessary to salvation. There may be some, I sometimes think, who, not having a sufficient knowledge of Christ in this world, will have an offer of pardon after death. I am not satisfied on this subject. About it I have my doubts. I don’t know that any to whom I may ever preach in this land, will be among the number of those who have another chance after death. I asked, On what texts do you ground the belief of a probation *for any*, after death? Answer.—‘All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.’ &c.

“ ‘The license to preach, given to him by (I think) the Third Presbytery of New York, which specifies that he in his examination by that body assented to the ‘Confession of Faith,’ was read, when the Moderator asked him, Do you now believe as you did at the time this license was given to you? Answer.—I don’t know but I do. Do you believe in the main, in the

Assembly's Catechism? Answer.—I don't know. I don't know much about the Catechism. With regard to the "Perseverance of the Saints," the candidate was equivocal, undetermined in his answers. All through the examination, the candidate was, in respect to many leading, fundamental doctrines, thus indefinite in his statements: seldom answering a question definitely, distinctly.

"I was unwilling to ordain and install Mr. Dorman; to me, the way was not open thus to proceed for these reasons:— 1. I seriously thought Mr. Dorman unsound in *the faith*, in some essential particulars. 2. I thought he was too undetermined in his faith, was too full of doubts, leaned in too many different directions, to be set over the church in Manchester.'

"The examination lasted from three to four hours, and resulted in a vote, by a majority of four, to proceed to the ordination. On this majority were Dr. Hawes, Dr. Spring, and Mr. Parker." Pp. 61, 62.

Among the obvious comments which the foregoing facts suggest, the principal to which we briefly call attention are,

1. As to the extent and gravity of the doctrinal defection thus manifested. This may be estimated either with reference to the doctrines rejected, or the numbers who reject them. In regard to the former, it is clear that this young coterie of ministers and students for the ministry adopt all the common-places of the New-school Theology, and somewhat more. This addition consists in pushing the standard New-school objections to the "Five Points," towards some logical consequences which their abettors have hitherto disowned. Thus the objections against original sin, including hereditary guilt and pollution, and the imputation of Adam's sin, no longer stop with linking the fall of the race with the fall of Adam, by mere sovereign constitution. All special connection between the fall of Adam and that of his posterity is denied, and his influence upon his descendants is reduced to that of mere "example." Plenary ability is pressed to its necessary consequence, of undermining Election and Perseverance. The anthropopathic view of God's attitude towards sin, and his modes of dealing with sinful creatures, must necessarily sooner or later impinge upon the doctrine of the everlasting inevitable punishment of those

who die in unbelief. Those modes of thinking and feeling, which run athwart the doctrines of Original Sin and sinful Inability, in order to "give all men a fair chance," must, by parity of reason, demand a "probation hereafter" for those who have not been duly plied with the means of grace in this life. It has been shown a hundred times, that out of such principles, coupled with the conceded facts in nature and providence for premises, true logic will readily, and, in due time, surely, evolve Universalism, then Infidelity, and then Atheism. The denial of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is itself, by necessary implication, the denial of all authoritative inspiration whatever. It leaves all free to pick and choose what portions and interpretations of Scripture they please, and to disown the residue. The startling peculiarity of the doctrinal manifestations among young ministers and theological students which we have presented to our readers is, that they give up even a nominal or pretended adhesion to doctrines heretofore confessed by the evangelical world, and show a positive affinity, heretofore unknown among those claiming to be orthodox, with the doctrinal license and negations of what is, in profession, "liberal christianity," in reality, baptized infidelity. And, in fact, this is one branch of the only alternative for what has been so long known as "New Divinity." It is not in itself a completed, self-poised, and self-sustaining system. The principles with which it impugns standard theology, if good for this, are good for a great deal more, as Dr. Squier's books abundantly show. They cannot be long operative among bodies of men without doing a vastly greater work of destruction than rounding off a few sharp points of "triangular theology." They will do the work which is going on among these young candidates for the ministry, and not only this, but much more. The other branch of the alternative is to renounce them. We rejoice also that this process has been going on in multitudes of men, both in New England and elsewhere. They see its logical contradiction to the most fundamental truths, and its experimental disagreement with their own Christian consciousness. But the system known as New Divinity cannot remain stationary. Its peculiarities must pass away, either by dying out, or by growing into far more pernicious and fatal

errors. In the New-school Presbyterian body, the former tendency has, as we rejoice to believe, for some time been most active and powerful—Dr. Squier's demonstrations to the contrary notwithstanding. Among Congregationalists, the two appear to be antagonizing, with an issue as yet uncertain.

As to the extent to which this liberalism has already leavened the Congregational mind, we have no great means of knowing beyond the information given in this pamphlet. We are credibly informed, however, that there have been several like cases. It is quite obvious that the endorsement given to these latitudinarian views, by both councils, was largely due to the exertions and influence of Drs. Hawes and Spring, especially the former. How far then are they to be regarded as representative men in such matters? Judging from their antecedents we should have said, eminently so,—at least, that what doctrines they would endorse, would be endorsed by a vast majority of Congregational ministers and churches. We hope it may be otherwise in the present case, and that their course is due to some of those unaccountable influences of private friendship or personal partiality for the candidates, or their friends, or the churches which had called them, or to some special idiosyncrasy and anomaly in their modes of thinking on these subjects, which, in rare instances, blind and pervert the judgments of the best and ablest men, so that they are not, *quoad hoc*, representative of those whom they usually represent. The fact that the council which installed Mr. Parker was swayed by these venerable men; embarrassed by the presence and tender urgency of the father-in-law of the candidate, himself a Professor of Theology; that the first council called to ordain Mr. Dorman unanimously rejected him; that the second, composed of men selected for the very purpose of surmounting the scruples which prevented the first from proceeding, under the earnest pleas of Messrs. Hawes, Spring, Parker, and their coadjutors, could be induced to give but a small majority for the ordination of the candidate, and that a large minority withdrew from all participation in the proceedings; that even those who had actively defended Dr. Bushnell opposed these candidates as unsound in the faith; induce us to hope that the manifestations under consideration are as yet

rather local, personal, and exceptional, than characteristic and normal in the Congregational body. Still, in any point of view, they are alarming. They betray tendencies which, unless successfully withstood, must prove absolutely destructive. We are glad that many among our Congregational brethren appreciate the services of Mr. Childs in his very faithful and candid presentation of the facts in the case, which arrested the attention and commanded the approbation of multitudes of the best people in the land, while it brought upon him the vehement censures of Messrs. Hawes and Spring. It is indeed ominous, that such men could have permitted themselves to insinuate that New England was unanimous in giving countenance to such liberalism, in the taunt, as turgid as groundless, that Mr. Childs in his complaints was "dolorously soloistic."

2. We call attention to but a single other point strikingly illustrated in the foregoing narrative—we mean the incompetency of Congregational councils to guard the truth as it is in Jesus, or to exclude such as impugn and deny it from the ministry. The case of Mr. Dorman, like innumerable others, shows that single Congregational churches can do whatever they choose, with rare exceptions. Whatever pastor they may choose, whatever doctrines or measures they may adopt, however contrary to the faith and practice of their own denomination or of Christendom, there is no regular, organic, restraining or corrective power from the church universal. It is, indeed, the custom to invite a council representing other churches, to sanction their choice of a pastor, and solemnly induct him into the sacred office; but they can pick the members of this council to suit their own purposes. And if the first body selected disappoints them, they can choose another, and still another, scouring the land till they can find parties who will serve their purposes. No body of Christians could long preserve its purity and integrity against such engineering. In every communion isolated persons can be hunted up, who, from weakness of intellect or will, under severe pressure, or from positive heretical pravity, will give sanction or tolerance to almost any scheme of doctrine when plausibly presented. Such a system of polity is, therefore, impotent for the main-

tenance of doctrine or order. It fails just where alone polity is of any use; where errors or scandals are to be kept out or purged out. So long as parties can pick their own judges, and if one tribunal fails them, construct another, more shrewdly selected for the very purpose of overbearing it, what authority can control them?

Messrs. Hawes and Spring and their coadjutors endeavour to break the force of Mr. Childs's disclosures by alleging that he sees with Presbyterian, and, therefore, prejudiced eyes, predisposed to detect and exaggerate faults and errors among Congregationalists. His dissatisfaction with these doctrines is accounted for by his looking from a "Presbyterian standpoint." We think this a reflection upon our Congregational brethren, which the facts do not justify, and which, if coming from a Presbyterian source, would justly offend them. Is it indeed so, that Congregationalists see nothing wrong in such doctrinal manifestations as those brought under review? The votes at Manchester, and the course of the *Puritan Recorder*, to go no further, evince the contrary. It betrays a conviction of the weakness of their cause, thus to raise an irrelevant issue, whereby sectarian prejudice may be invoked to overshadow and veil from view doctrinal derelictions. But since this issue has been raised by them, not by Presbyterians, it is proper to remark, that Presbyterian polity affords channels unknown to Congregationalism, through which the vigour and soundness of the whole church can operate for the removal of corruptions and disorders in particular localities. This was so obvious in the early history of the Connecticut churches, that they framed the Saybrook Platform for the express purpose of introducing the Presbyterian element of *fixed* ecclesiastical tribunals, which they called Consociations, whose judgments were final and conclusive upon all parties, with the intent of obviating the ecclesiastical confusion and anarchy which had become ascendant more than a century and a half ago. This Presbyterian element was so conspicuous in this constitution, that, until a very recent period, the Congregationalists of Connecticut were commonly called, and called themselves Presbyterians. By degrees, however, one Consociation after another abdicated its prerogative of ordaining, installing, and dismissing pastors,

acting in judicial cases, and on "all occasions ecclesiastical," with conclusive authority. The result is, that these bodies, with occasional exceptions, have become mere organizations which keep up a traditional annual meeting, and pay some attention to the state of religion, missions, and charitable contributions within their bounds. All ecclesiastical business proper is remanded to the transient picked councils from whom it was originally taken. All ecclesiastical authority beyond that of single congregations is thus at an end. Hence the events now transpiring. Even Dr. Hawes said in a sermon preached in Boston within a few years, before the Congregational Board of Publication, that Congregationalism had two great wants, "a common creed and a better organization." He urged the necessity of this reform in order to keep its "hold of the conservative and thoughtful," and avoid falling into the hands of "the rash and radical." This opinion is eminently just, and could hardly have had a stronger confirmation than in those late events in which he has performed so important a part. How great and deplorable is the change in this regard, within the present century, during most of which Dr. Hawes has held a commanding position and influence, not only in his own vicinity, but in all Connecticut and New England, is well shown by Mr. Childs in the following passage, which is, in other ways, interesting and instructive.

"It does seem to us time we were done with the miserable attempts to forestall the defence of truth and the exposure of error, by the perpetual cry of 'Presbyterianism.' The simple fact is, the *professed* doctrines of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism are identical. The doctrines now held and taught in the Old-school Presbyterian Church are neither more nor less than the precise doctrines of the New England standards and the New England fathers. To denounce and ridicule these doctrines is to denounce and ridicule the original faith of New England. To overthrow these is to overthrow the foundations of the New England churches. Let us understand, then, what those men are doing who appeal to the churches by the outcry of 'Presbyterianism' and 'Princetonism.' Let us understand that under this cover the battle is waged against the

bulwarks of our faith—against the foundations of the true New England theology and of the word of God.

“It deserves to be said that our fathers had none of this jealousy of Presbyterianism. They were neither afraid nor ashamed of the name. The writer has before him two volumes of ‘Sermons by Nathan Strong; Pastor of the North PRESBYTERIAN Church in Hartford, Conn.,’ printed in 1798–1800. Dr. Strong, as we have said, was the immediate predecessor of Dr. Hawes. In 1799 the *Hartford North Association* of ministers, composed of such men as Drs. Strong and Flint of Hartford, and Dr. Perkins of West Hartford, made the following declaration of their principles:

“This Association give information to all whom it may concern, that the constitution of the churches in the State of Connecticut, founded on the common usages, and the Confession of Faith, Heads of Agreement, and articles of Church Discipline, adopted at the earliest period of the settlement of the State, *is not Congregational, but contains the essentials of the government of the Church of Scotland, or [the] Presbyterian Church in America;* particularly as it gives a decisive power to ecclesiastical councils; and a consociation, consisting of ministers and messengers, or a lay representation from the churches, is possessed of substantially the same authority as Presbytery. The judgments, decisions, and censures in our churches and in the Presbyterian are mutually deemed valid. *The churches, therefore, in Connecticut at large, and in our district in particular, are not now, and never were, from the earliest period of our settlement, Congregational churches,* according to the ideas and forms of church order contained in the Book of Discipline, called the Cambridge Platform. There are, however, scattered over the State, perhaps ten or twelve churches, (*unconsociated*.) which are properly called Congregational, agreeably to the rules of Church Discipline, in the book above mentioned. Sometimes, indeed, the associated churches of Connecticut are loosely and vaguely, though improperly, termed Congregational. While our churches in the State at large are, in the most essential and important respects, the same as the Presbyterian, still in minute and unimportant points of church order and discipline,

both we and the Presbyterian Church in America acknowledge a difference.'

"According to this testimony, the true and proper form of the Connecticut churches is *Presbyterian*, and not Congregational. And can any man doubt where Drs. Strong and Perkins would have stood at such a time as this? Would they have opposed sound Presbyterianism for the sake of unsound Congregationalism?" P. 58.

Is there any reasonable probability that either of these ordinations could have been consummated, if this ancient Consociation and those adjacent to it had retained their original and appropriate functions?

We are far from saying that any ecclesiastical constitution whatever, administered by imperfect men, will be a sure and unfailing safeguard against the intrusion of error and disorder. We are far from saying that the best and purest forms of church polity may not sometimes, through ignorance, passion, and partisanship, be perverted so as to work oppression and injustice. But if this be a sufficient argument against them, it is an argument against all church government and order, and in favour of unmitigated confusion and anarchy in the sphere of religion. Certainly it will not be pretended that no such evils occur in the exercise of government by single congregations, which may, if they choose, and often do in fact, prevent any effective appeal from their oppressive acts. Yet will it be pretended that, notwithstanding such drawbacks, discipline of this kind is not better than utter ecclesiastical anarchy and licentiousness? It is one thing that errors and disorders creep in, notwithstanding the best provisions for preventing them, which sometimes fail, though ordinarily sufficient for the purpose. It is quite another, that all barriers are prostrated, and the door is purposely opened to invite whatever inroads upon truth and order any may choose to make. In the latter case the friends of the gospel find themselves helpless against the intruding floods of error, and put at every disadvantage in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Crimes will sometimes be committed under the most perfect governments, and in the best ordered communities. Will it be said, therefore, that good government is useless, that no government

is better, or that because it does not repress all crime, it does not nevertheless repress so much, that, without it, earth would be one vast Pandemonium?

*Rev. H. W. Beecher's Sermon on Justification.*

Since the foregoing was written, the last of the productions placed at the head of this article has been given to the world. The rationalistic views of sin and punishment already brought to the notice of our readers must, by unrelenting consequence, press upon expiation, atonement, and redemption. If sin has not that intrinsic demerit which renders it, whether in the inhabitants of Christian or heathen lands, deserving of eternal punishment; if sinful dispositions as well as acts are not justly obnoxious to condemnation and penalty; if it is harsh and cruel, or contrary to "honour and right" in God to visit pains and penalties which would be unbecoming in a high-souled man, or tender-hearted human parent, in like circumstances, then not only must the doctrine of punishment crumble away under the shock of such antagonistic principles; but expiation and atonement, by the substitution of the sufferings and sacrifice of another in the sinner's stead, must also fall before them. Our readers scarcely need to be informed of the development of such consequences, and the utter rejection of the doctrine of vicarious atonement by Dr. Bushnell some years since, in his *God in Christ*. We wish to make a record of a still more flagrant repudiation of the whole method of justification through the atonement of Christ, in the sermon by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, circulated among multitudes of admiring readers in the columns of the *Independent*. The following extracts speak for themselves.

"And this is the root idea of justification before God. There is a heart-power in God, which, when it falls upon the soul, acts just as benefaction does between man and man; between parent and child; between benefactor and orphan. That which you see of the nature of noble qualities in the ten thousand relations of life in fragments and in imperfect operation, has its full glorious form in the soul of God; and the heart of God is so pure, so gracious, so sweet, so beneficent, that when there is nothing to prevent it from giving a heart-stroke to a sinful

soul, it melts the wickedness in that soul and overcomes it with superlative power, and redeems it.

“A man’s justification, then, takes its origin, as we think of it, in his unworthiness, in his sinfulness, in his guilt, and in his danger; and he comes before God as a sinner. Then God looks upon him with saving compassion. Not on account of any arrangement that he has made, not on account of any expedient that he has set up, not on account of any settlement or plan that he has fixed, but on account of what he is, he looks upon a sinful man and says, ‘I so love you that I accept you just as if you were not sinful.’ This is illustrated by one of the simplest things in the world. A mother, when her child does wrong, says, ‘My darling child, will you do so any more?’ and tears are the child’s answer, and she clasps him to her bosom without another word, and the matter is all settled. There is the mother’s heart an atoning sacrifice for the child. Theologians have put forth the absurd notion that God has made a plan of salvation. As half a dozen men sometimes take up a poor debtor’s affairs, and look at them, and put their heads together, and fix them, and then say to the man, ‘Well, we think we have made a satisfactory adjustment of your affairs;’ so theologians talk as if there was a kind of conference between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and as if after talking the matter over they concluded that they would help men out of their trouble, and made an arrangement for that purpose. They thus turn heaven into a counting-room and make God’s everlasting love to be like a mere business committee; and so belittle the whole thing. They seem to think that God arranged with the Son, and that the Son agreed to suffer for the world, with the understanding that when he had suffered enough, mankind should be loved of God, and should be pardoned and helped by him. But what set the Father to begin this work of saving men at all, if he could not love them till after the Son had suffered for them? If that was the case, how came there to be any arrangement made? Where did it start? Or, did the Son love the world first, and tell the Father that he wished that he would redeem it? Is not the whole of this talk about a plan of salvation a mess of sheer ignorance, not to say nonsense?”

Again: "But at last there arises a sense of God's nature as loving, pitying, sympathizing, and healing. The heart of God is the world's hospital; and men that have been striving to get well by medicating themselves, becoming no better, but rather growing worse, at last gain this conception of God as one whose nature it is to accept men, not on account of any arrangement or plan that he has made, but for the purpose of healing him. When a man lays his case at the feet of his Master and says, 'Lord, I am a sinner come to be healed of sin,' with grace and benignity his Lord and Master says, 'Thee I accept. Thou art my child, I forgive the sins thou hast committed in the past, and accept thee for guidance, and education, and salvation in the future.'"

If ranker Socinianism than this can be found in the works of Socinius; or if a more complete repudiation of the scriptural and church doctrine of justification can be found in all the productions of Massachusetts Unitarians, we have yet to see it. If anything could be more offensive than the rejection of this article *stantis vel cadentis ecclesie*, it is the light and flippant style in which it is assailed and disowned. We are glad that it did not pass without calling forth vigorous protests from leading Congregational journals, not only against the sermon, but against the *Independent*, for circulating such poison among its vast company of readers, without the slightest antidote in the way of editorial criticism or comment. These at length roused the *Independent* from its ominous silence. We are exceedingly sorry that along with some refutation of Mr. Beecher's outgivings, it offers a trifling and flimsy apology for them, and for its own course in publishing them, which deprive that refutation of its principal value as a testimony or protest against these dangerous and fatal sentiments. It says,

"The views of Mr. Beecher in the sermon here cited are condemned by several religious journals as a dangerous heresy, and *The Independent* is censured for giving them publicity. We confess that we were somewhat surprised when we came to read the sermon, which we did not happen to do until we saw the criticisms of our contemporaries upon it. But *The Inde-*

*pendent* is too well known as an advocate of New England Orthodoxy to be obliged to publish a disclaimer against whatever rhetorical license Mr. Beecher may take with phases of doctrine which he deems obnoxious. We do not believe that he had a thought of assailing the substance of the *doctrine* of justification by faith; but with an overflowing sense of the love of God, and a feeling that somehow that love is straitened by the theories of Princeton Repertories and Boston Reviews, he went off into a rhetorical *excursus* against that class of theologians, and not being versed in the technics of theological warfare, he made the mistake of firing upon the colours of his own regiment. His loyal heart will bring him back in due time, and it will hardly be worth while to court-martial him!"

We have too much respect for the perspicacity of this writer to suppose for one moment that he does not know that such a palliation as this is scarcely better than the thing thus extenuated. "Rhetorical license," or bewildered hostility to the *Princeton Repertory* and the *Boston Review*, will never excuse Mr. Beecher, or an angel from heaven, for preaching another gospel, and for giving such aid and comfort as the sermon in question offers to the enemies of the cross of Christ; or others for circulating it, and shielding it from merited condemnation, under the assumed *imprimatur* of being "advocates of New England Orthodoxy." When this sneering attack on the plan of salvation is retracted as broadly as it is proclaimed, then can we accept some such palliation as "rhetorical license," or a mental eclipse and hallucination regarding "Princeton Repertories,"—never before. We insist first of all on that which also we have received, "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Nor ought the bold and obtrusive renunciation of this corner-stone of Christianity from the pulpit and the press, nor the flippant and trifling defence or palliation of such a course, by widely circulated Christian journals to pass without awakening notes of just alarm and righteous reprobation. This indeed is no uncertain sound. We do not mean that it shall be. It however falls short of the severity of censure expressed in some Congregational journals

that have hitherto been closely affiliated with the *Independent*.\* The extent and earnestness of this protest encourages the hope that the character of rationalism has now made itself sufficiently palpable to rouse an effective reaction against it; and that "as Jannes and Jambres, . . . they shall proceed no farther, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." 2 Tim. iii. 8, 9.

\* The following from the *Congregational Herald*, of Chicago, we reprint from the *New York Observer*, of July 25.

"We grieve to see such loose theology circulated in the columns of the *Independent*, and that its editors may know how those feel who have always sympathized with its views and have delighted to aid its progress, we conclude with an extract from a private letter of a well-known, influential, and progressive minister in the West, who will pardon this unexpected use of his words, as we withhold his name:

July 10, 1861.

DEAR BROTHER:—How do you like the discovery announced in the last *Independent*, that God never had any "plan of salvation," and that the "atone-ment of Christ is simply a manifestation of divine love which melts the sinner, and reconciles him to God"? Is the moral government of God a myth, and the idea that a propitiation was needful to render pardon consistent with justice, an obsolete superstition that came down from the darker ages? Is H. W. Beecher as much of a Unitarian as his last published sermon would indicate? What are we to do? Are the editors of the *Independent* themselves on the high road to Unitarianism? They declare indeed, occasionally, that they have no responsibility for the sentiments of the correspondents, &c. But they have, and they cannot escape it. The world will hold them to an accountability. They are as much responsible for Beecher's sentiments as they are for Cheever's. But when Cheever takes some ground on "Congregational Order" which they think unsound, they come out with a protest as long as one of Gov. Wise's letters. But Beecher may ridicule orthodoxy once a month the year round, and pitch into the doctrines which we preach, and on which we rest our salvation, and not an editorial pen has one word of reply or rebuke. Are we being sold out to the devil by that paper? Are our denomination going to follow meekly and admiringly wherever Beecher chooses to lead us, and never utter one protest because it is Beecher? I am exceedingly distressed in view of the developments of that man's sermons. Some of them I esteem as super-excellent, and some of them are about on a par with Fowler and Greeley, in respect to theology. The last one would do for Gerrit Smith or Beriah Green. What shall we do? What do your editorial corps think of the matter? Has the *Herald* no duty to do? I have taken the *Independent* a long time, have recommended it, and aided to some extent its circulation. May God forgive me. All the religion that it now brings to its readers is in the sermon, and that is such religion as our denomination did not formerly relish. Do give me some light."