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ART. I.—*Truth, Charity, and Unity.*

TRUTH is either the reality of things, or such a representation in thought, word, or other signs of thought, as correctly sets forth such reality. To say that the human soul is made for truth as its formal object, its aliment and life, is only saying that it is intelligent and rational. To say that it is not pre-conformed to the truth, and to apprehend and enjoy it, is to declare it unintelligent, irrational, sottish, brutish. It then feeds on, and is governed by delusions, shams, unrealities. And in so far as human minds, singly or collectively, have lost the love and relish for truth, or incline to accept and obey untruths, they have fallen from their normal uprightness and integrity into depravity and blindness. God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. He has so swerved from his high estate, as to turn reason, his crown and glory, into a minister of unreason, which is his degradation and shame. Madness is in the hearts of the sons of men, for they are fully set in them to do evil. They hate the light and refuse to come to the light, because their deeds are evil. Hence man's only true rectitude, and true well-being, lie in knowing, believing, loving, obeying, living the truth. All iniquity begins and ends in believing and acting lies. A life

of sin and unbelief is but a living, concrete, incarnated lie. These propositions are their own evidence. And if they were not, infallible authority implicates all sin with deceit and blindness. It tells us of "all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause shall God send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned that believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12.

According to the definition with which we started, truth has objective being and validity, independent of the percipient mind. The only exception to this is, the acts or states of the mind itself—and these only before or during, but not after their occurrence. If the mind has once had any thought, feeling, purpose, any act or state, no subsequent act, apprehension, or conviction can alter it. And beyond this, no view or thought of our minds can alter or modify anything, or the truth in respect to anything. All the flippant talk and pretension, so common in some quarters, about given propositions being true to him who holds, maintains, or professes them; that error is truth to him who believes so, whatever it may be to others, is worse than puerile. Truth is intrinsic and immutable, whether we accept it or not. The contrary of it, by whomsoever accepted, is false. His thinking it true cannot make it true, however inconvenient the consequences. If one leaps over a precipice, or down Niagara, it does not help him that he supposed the law of gravitation would pause in its action. If any believe there is no God, no Christ, no Holy Ghost, no redemption, no judgment, no heaven, no hell, this alters nothing. It does not annihilate them. If by faith he does not find them true for his salvation, by unbelief he will find them true for his perdition.

There is, however, a just sense in which the word truth is used subjectively: not for the standard or representation of reality; but for conformity to that standard in word, life, and action, particularly in our communications to others. In this sense we speak of men of truth, meaning men who live and act and speak the truth, especially the latter, *i. e.*, veracity.

Taken on every side, truth is the object, source, standard, measure, and conformity to it is the sum and essence, of all excellence, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. It is only in knowing, loving, and obeying the truth that a rational substance finds its true and proper being and development, felicity and glory. All deflection from, or loss of, the truth, is for it abnormity, debasement, and perdition. Hence the Absolute Perfection of any being is his Absolute Truth. The root of all God's moral perfection is that he is infinite in truth, of which he is the prime source, standard, and norm. And the summation and climax of the glories of Him who hath a name above every name, and embodies every human and divine excellence, lie in this, that He is the Truth. As the Eternal Word, he evermore articulates in creation, providence, and redemption, the truth to the intelligent universe. His glory as the Only Begotten of the Father, is that he is full of grace and Truth.

It is then a first principle that all goodness supposes fealty to the truth, as its ground, essence, and fruit; and that all depravity begins and ends in treason to the truth. What then are our chief obligations to the truth?

Comprehensive of all else is the supreme love of it, involving of course the paramount desire to know and obey it. This does not imply impossibilities. It does not imply in a rightly regulated mind a desire to attain that Omniscience which is the exclusive prerogative of the Infinite Mind. But it does imply a desire to know the truth on all subjects about which we know and think, or ought to know and think anything. It does not aspire to the *omne scibile*. But it abhors all falsehood, and dreads all error and delusion in regard to any subject, and especially any on which it ought to have genuine knowledge. This includes a supreme desire to know the truth on all matters requisite for our guidance in our duties to God and man, in our various stations and relations; including first, religion; secondly, morality; thirdly, our special vocation. All need, and ought to seek, essentially the same light in regard to the two former, the principles of which are essentially the same for all men of every age and nation. The last varies endlessly with the special occupations and responsibili-

ties of individual persons. The only law here is, that we seek to know the truth in respect to whatever we have cause to know, or think, or teach, or say, or do anything whatsoever. Nor are we to seek truth here or elsewhere, merely in its utilitarian aspects or on utilitarian grounds. It is to be sought for its own sake, as in itself inestimably precious. All truth and knowledge are in themselves beyond price. The possession of them is in itself a high endowment of the soul, which expands, sublimates, and irradiates it. It is the search for truth, as such, that discovers it, and with it, its uses. And this search is a grand moral and intellectual gymnastic. Ignorance starves, error poisons, truth nourishes and invigorates the soul—especially truth in regard to God, immortality, revelation, and redemption.

But even in regard to that religious truth, the knowledge of which is incumbent upon all, various degrees of fulness and exactness of knowledge are demanded, according as we are called simply to practise and live it, or beyond this to teach it, or beyond this withal, to teach and train the teachers of it. Whoever assumes to practise any of the learned or skilled professions, and to make prescriptions for the souls or bodies or estates of men, without some due knowledge therefor, rushes unbidden into responsibilities to which he is unequal, and perpetrates a fraud upon all whom he induces to trust his counsel.

The love of the truth evinces itself, 1. In earnestness, or a profound sense of its inestimable value, and of the correlative obligation to acquire, maintain, and propagate it. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Buy it at any price. Sell it not at any cost. Such is the language of all true souls. No upright mind can be indifferent to the truth or disparage its importance. To be so, is to abnegate both reason and faith, and deny its own intelligent nature. Without earnestness, morality and religion are phantoms, and character has no back-bone. He who has no zeal for the truth, particularly moral and religious truth, zeal to know, to uphold, inculcate and disseminate it, wants the first elements of soundness and substance of character. He who says truth, error, falsehood, are all one to him, does thereby proclaim himself an outlaw, a scoundrel,

“a liar from the beginning.” He who says, as a meteoric revolutionist in theology once said, “he can accept as many creeds as are offered him,” proclaims, if he knows what he says, not his liberality, but his utter scepticism and unbelief in religion, or else his simple idiocy and madness. It is the same as saying that we can believe a thing is and is not at the same moment, and swallow contradictions, truth and lies with equal relish. He who says,

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right,

does thereby avow his contempt for all faith, for all truth determining his modes of faith, and for all life inspired by such faith, and shaped by such truth. And yet there is such a thing as bigotry into which earnestness may degenerate. Indeed, bigotry is simply zeal for certain sentiments, so blind, narrow, distorted, shrunken, ossified, that it is no longer zeal for truth, but zeal for sect or self, shibboleth or party. In order that earnestness may not fossilize itself into such an odious counterfeit, it must be tempered with candour. We therefore say:

2. That the supreme love of the truth begets and evinces itself in candour, or openness to all light and evidence which more perfectly manifest the truth, and a readiness to give them all just weight. It is evident that he who wants this, wants the supreme love of the truth. And this is the true antidote to all bigotry, which is the stubborn and blind adherence to some false dogma or set of dogmas; or an extravagant magnifying of their importance, if true; or a refusal duly to appreciate other views and systems, their evidences and merits. The bigot, even if holding the truth, virtually turns it into error by obstinately closing his eyes to the evidence of other and correlate truths, which he denies. He is so afraid for the little angle or segment of truth he holds, that he dare not let in upon himself the light which would reveal other truths equally important, lest it should somehow damage or belittle what he does hold. In short, he is afraid of light, lest it should dispel his darkness. Hence, if he be a creature of life and feeling, he is apt to be bitter, intolerant, and uncharitable towards such as differ from him. He sticks in the mere shell of traditional or

partisan views, without candidly weighing and testing these and antagonistic views in the light of Scripture and reason. And he is uncomfortable when any light is offered which might expose the weakness of his position. Bigotry, therefore, is inconsistent with fealty to truth, and both it and fanaticism are the sure offspring of the want of candour in receiving and weighing evidence of truth.

Fanaticism is vehement and passionate devotion to some error, or, what is very much the same, to some truth exclusive of other truths which surround and qualify it. Such extravagant ardour in behalf of one idea, even if true, regardless of related ideas and truths which bound and modify it, is often the worst form of error, and develops that ultraism so common in this country, where the "abundance of the thing has originated the word." It sometimes has the poison of bigotry in it, although the latter is often passionless, and free from the intemperate and virulent heat, which ever and anon inflames fanaticism, and drives it rough-shod over the most sacred truths, obligations, and affections. Fanaticism usually thrives most in crowds, (*circum fana*) amid the excitement of numbers, the overbearing current of phrenzied, popular, or partisan feeling, goading men often to sacrifice to some overmastering passion, principles which they have always counted sacred. Its very nature, like bigotry, is hostile to the love of truth, above which it exalts self and party, shibboleth and hobby.

Bigotry and fanaticism beget all uncharitableness, which is equally hostile to the love of the truth. Hence,

3. Another element in the love of the truth is charity. This is equidistant from an indiscriminating indifference to truth on the one hand, and that bigotry, fanaticism, and intolerance, which mistake some little fragment for the whole, erect minima into maxima, and molehills into mountains. Charity "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth," and cannot be indifferent or otherwise than earnest to know, maintain, and propagate it. But charity, while intolerant of error, in proportion to its magnitude, is kind and tender towards the errorist. It strives to take the most favourable view of his case; to find some explanation of his aberrations consistent with his moral integrity. In short, it "believeth all things, hopeth all things,

endureth all things" as regards the errorist, while not sparing his error. It "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

Another great office of charity and candour united, is justly to estimate the relative importance of given truths and their contrary errors—to avoid alike exaggerating or underrating them. Bigotry and fanaticism transgress on either side. They belittle great things, and magnify the little—tithe mint, anise, and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. But perhaps there is no sphere in which mistake and obliquity of judgment are easier or more common. That may be little in itself, which is great by reason of its relations, surroundings, and implications. A tooth is a very insignificant part of an animal; yet it is in some cases so characteristic and essential, that Cuvier was able from a single tooth to reproduce the skeleton of an extinct species. The mouth, the nose, the eyes, the tongue, the throat, the lungs, the brain in man, are severally very small parts of his body; but they are essential, some of them to life, some to articulate speech, or other functions of intelligence, all of them to an unmaimed and unmarred humanity. Can we say as much for the nails or hair, for leanness or corpulency, the little finger or toe? The pins of a frame are the least in magnitude, and yet far more essential to its strength than some of the heavier joists and studs. The law of the Lord is perfect. Hence our Lord will sooner let heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or tittle thereof fail. God, Christ, faith, love, repentance, regeneration, sin, grace, &c., are single words, mostly monosyllables. And yet, undeniably our eternity hangs on our relation to these, and each of them, and that in their true meaning. There is such a thing as sticking in the letter which killeth, to the loss of the Spirit which giveth life. There may be a great tenacity of the mere letter of a creed, without insight of its true meaning and scope as intended by its framers. And yet the Arian controversy is proof that a single iota may be so placed as to make all the difference between holding the supreme divinity and the mere creaturehood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here then is a fundamental article of Christianity depending on the difference between *ὁμοούσιος* and *ὁμοιοούσιος*.

How much more is immediately involved here than in the by no means unimportant controversy between sublapsarian and supralapsarian? or, between those trinitarians who do, and do not accept the eternal generation or filiation of the Son? And do not such things even go more to the marrow of Christianity than the mode of baptism or exclusive singing of Rouse's version?

But still farther, candour and charity make a broad distinction between the importance of the knowledge and belief of certain doctrines to the private Christian, or as conditions of admission to the Lord's table; and the same regarded as qualifications for office in the church, particularly the sacred ministry. Ignorance and error in many things may and must be tolerated in private Christians, which are intolerable in those who are "set for the defense of the gospel," and must be "apt to teach" it, "able to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." One may have piety which gives a right to the sacraments, who is too full of ignorance and error to be fit for the ministry. Although he may not directly reject any doctrine, the acceptance of which is immediately essential to salvation, he may reject or ignore those which the Scriptures teach, and which are essential to the spiritual prosperity and fullest growth, if not to the salvation of the soul; or which are essential to the logical consistency, the effective defense, and the permanent preservation of fundamental Christian doctrines. And it is no breach of charity to insist on some of these points in ministers, even though not exacted of private Christians, or made a ground of disallowing the ministerial standing of those in other communions who do not accept them. In the illustrations which follow, it is not meant of course that all shortcoming in any single doctrine should necessarily be a bar to licensure and ordination; but the clear rejection of the whole, or even of some chief parts of them is a very different matter.

Thus, if we take the doctrine of imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity as the ground of their condemnation, and their consequent abandonment to sin and misery, degradation and perdition, which some have flippantly styled "imputed nonsense," no one would judge belief in it essential to salvation.

Christ may be received without it. Yet the Bible clearly asserts that, "by the offence of one, (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation," and that "the judgment was by one to condemnation." Thus only can the race have had any probation before its fall, by being tried in the trial of its first progenitor and representative. Thus alone can the tremendous evils to which it is born have any ground in sin as their meritorious cause, or be due to anything but the mere sovereignty of God. Thus alone can the undeniable facts of our fallen state be relieved, not of all mystery indeed, but of dire perplexities that thicken and lower upon any human hypothesis. So in rejecting Imputation, one of the firmest scriptural and rational supports of the doctrine of original sin is cast away. Not only so. But if the idea of imputation carries the absurdities which its adversaries charge, then a serious blow is given to the Scriptures themselves, which are full of imputation, word and thing. And not only so, but logically and by immediate consequence this overthrows justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer. For first, this result of necessity follows, if the very idea of imputation is absurd. And secondly, Rom. v. 12, *et seq.*, expressly and manifoldly asserts a similitude between the manner of our condemnation through Adam's sin, and our justification through Christ's obedience and righteousness. And if not justified through Christ's righteousness, all that remains is our own righteousness—which let him trust who will, and who dare! Nor are these logical consequences averted, they are rather necessitated by mediate imputation, as it is called, substituted for the immediate imputation of Adam's sin. For the gist of this mediate scheme is that Adam's sin is imputed because, as fallen and sinning, we virtually sanction and endorse it, and so incur its guilt through our personal sin. This does not explain the fall of our race by a probation in Adam, the issue of that probation in his sin as our representative, and the consequent imputation of that sin to his posterity, as the judicial ground of their loss of Divine favour and lapse into sin and misery. But it explains the fall of the race by the personal fall of each individual through a sovereign divine constitution. And as, according to Rom. v. 12, *et seq.*, the manner of justification by

the obedience and righteousness of Christ is one with that of their condemnation for Adam's sin—if this is on account of their own antecedent sin, then their justification through Christ's righteousness is on account of their own antecedent righteousness. This subverts the whole gospel system of salvation by the alone merits of Christ. Hence the reason why imputation even of Adam's sin, if not essential to piety, or even to the substance of evangelical preaching, is essential to the integrity of any theological system which long preserves intact the materials of such preaching, the truth as it is in Jesus. Hence its prominence in the great Reformation symbols and theology.

So again, on a superficial view, it may seem a tenuous and shadowy question whether the native dispositions of the soul are not only corrupt, but sinful and guilty—or whether the feelings and desires that prompt volition, or dispositions lying back and causative of acts, have moral quality, and consequent merit or demerit. But it is of the most immediate and profound practical moment. It touches the very springs of experimental religion. For this goes as deep as, but not below, our moral nature and character. If only volitions or purposes have moral character, then religious experience does not go beyond these. It does not reach the feelings, desires, dispositions, "heart." This is the logical consequence of the dogmas that sin, holiness, moral character, pertain only to acts. It exiles religion from the heart, its proper seat, out of which are the issues of life. And the logical is always tending to be the practical result of any doctrine which is permanently and widely accepted. This case has been no exception. The question of ability is of equal moment. If man is able *propriis viribus* to do and be all that the gospel requires, all that is involved in true Christian piety, then true Christian faith, love, holiness, involve no more than man unaided by the Holy Spirit can do, which is certainly contrary to the uniform and most express testimony of Scripture. This doctrine of plenary ability therefore lowers the whole standard of piety by inevitable logic. And here, as elsewhere, theory must in due time become practice. Much is said in some quarters of moral inability, under which term a great truth is expressed, while

a common perversion of it masks a great error. All ability and inability to discharge moral and spiritual duties are of course moral. They pertain to our moral nature or state. But some maintain that moral inability means simply a want of will, which the will can remove, and not also a want of power, which by his will the sinner is wholly unable to remove. It means not that he cannot, but only that he will not. This is using the term "moral inability" to mask ability, contrary to the Scriptures, to the creeds, the prayers, the experience of Christians. Those who do this are wont to contrast natural with moral ability and inability; to say that man is naturally able, but morally unable to obey the gospel. But such language is loose and misleading. There is here no necessary contrast between natural and moral. Man is at once naturally and morally depraved, and unable to deliver himself from his bondage to sin. This, however, has reference to his nature as depraved, not as originally created. He has whatever of power is involved in possessing the essential faculties of humanity, though in a depraved moral state, from which he is neither naturally nor morally able to deliver himself, until born again from above. The real question here is not whether one holds to a moral or natural, but whether he holds a real inability, irremovable except by Divine grace.

The same importance attaches to the difference between a real divine sovereignty, predestination, and election, and the view which in any manner makes the eternal purposes of God hinge on the foresight of faith, good works, or any choice and volitions of the creature. On the latter system God's whole government and providence over moral agents must be contingent on their choice and permission—and hence tend to anarchy and chaos, while his people owe it to themselves and not to God, that they differ from others. They have no security but their own strength for perseverance in holiness or the continued stability of heaven itself. What a foundation this for humility, gratitude, faith, hope, and assurance!

Were Christ's sufferings and death a true and proper satisfaction to Divine justice for the sins of God's people; a penal and substitutionary infliction in place of the punishment of the believer? Or was his death a mere governmental expe-

dient for the good of the universe, dictated by benevolence, a display of the Divine abhorrence of sin without punishing it, or having any regard whatever to distributive justice, as a municipal government destroys a house in order to save a city from conflagration? The former certainly is the scriptural representation, and accords with the deepest experience of God's people. The latter virtually obliterates the Divine justice, and radically changes our fundamental conceptions of sin, punishment, and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. It penetrates sooner or later to the very core of experimental piety.

Many other issues might be named of like moment in their logical and theological consequences, and ultimate practical tendencies. But these will suffice, and have been adduced because of the danger of their being now overlooked or underrated in great concerns in which they should have a commanding influence. Charity does not require, it forbids us to be indifferent to them. It does not permit us to erect them into terms of communion with those who otherwise give credible evidence of piety. But it does demand that we require in those that we induct into the office of teaching, or preaching, and defending Christianity, the recognition of the great truths on these subjects set forth in the Scriptures and our standards, while we fully recognize the unquestionable ministerial standing and brotherhood of those duly commissioned by other churches holding the Head, who do not see with us in these points. But while charity requires in the teachers and defenders of the Christian religion, a knowledge not only of the central citadel, but of the outworks of the system, it proceeds according to scriptural measure and within reasonable bounds. It does not insist on uniformity in small points, in things indifferent or unrevealed, or in mere philosophical explanations of things revealed. It cannot demand or permit any super-scriptural tests of righteousness in matters of morality, of civil government, or philosophy, which the Bible has placed among things indifferent. It may indeed be of the first importance whether one be Realist or Nominalist, whether he holds the philosophy of Locke, Reid, Berkeley, Edwards, Hamilton, or Kant. But unless as applied by its adherents, it involves con-

traditions of Christian truth, not merely remote and inferential, but direct and immediate, it cannot without breach of charity be made a bar to ordination. It would be worse than puerile to make the relative length, or the rhetorical structure of prayers or sermons, singing with or without the aid of choirs and instruments, speculations as to the interior constitution of the Trinity, the questions whether human nature is a trichotomy or dichotomy, tests of ministerial standing in any communion. So of opinions on crude scientific theories, geological, ethnological, chronological, and all else the like, so long as they do not run to a positive denial of the authority or truth of Scripture or its doctrines.

Hence it appears, how superficial or irrelevant are some phrases current on this subject, which are plausible only to those who do not look through the sound to the sense. Says the *American Presbyterian Review* for January, 1868, p. 137, "We agree in the substantives but differ in the adjectives." Well, what then. Look at the following instances of such agreement—God is gracious, God is not gracious. God is three in one, God is not three in one. The Son of God is incarnate, the Son of God is not incarnate. The sufferings of Christ were penal and vicarious, they were not penal and vicarious. Scriptural church government is prelatical, it is not prelatical. Is not this agreeing in substantives and differing in adjectives? And is it not enough to show that all this may be without the possibility of organic or any other unity desirable as such unity is?

It is common to urge in behalf of complete organic union between those Christian bodies that are in earnest controversy on great doctrinal issues, that the points on which they agree are more important than those on which they differ. This is certainly and delightfully true of all who hold the Head, even Christ—who hold enough of saving truth to render salvation possible. It is true as relates to Presbyterians, Close-Communion Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists. And it is a ground for mutual recognition, fellowship, and manifold coöperation as Christians. But here the differences on minor points of external polity and rites, are obviously such as to preclude any present possibility of organic unity.

And between some of them doctrinal differences are important enough to render it unprofitable.

It is, however, said that the incorporation of these sects into one organic body, on the basis of teaching and preaching only the points in which they agree, to the exclusion of all in which they differ, would greatly augment the spiritual and evangelical power of the church, by concentrating it upon the very marrow of the gospel, those more important points in which they agree, unencumbered by the lesser points in which they differ. We earnestly long for that consummation when the points of difference may be so attenuated as to render this reasoning just. But that, for the present, it is the merest chimera, appears from the following considerations. 1. This provides for feeding souls with the *minima*, not the fulness and richness of saving truth. As the body may *live* on what is insufficient for its growth and strength, so the soul may *live* on what is insufficient for its spiritual thrift and vigour. 2. If things in which we differ from others are unimportant or injurious to be taught, why are they taught in the Scriptures, as we believe they are? Shall we presume to declare it useless, and worse than useless, to teach what God has revealed? 3. Shall we dare bind ourselves not to teach any part of that word, which God has charged us to preach, to shun to declare any part of "the whole counsel of God;" to refuse to teach *all* the things which Christ has commanded us to teach men to observe and do, in giving us the commission to preach the gospel? 4. The body can live with the arms and legs amputated. It can live upon bread and water only. Is such then the best condition of the body, or this most nutritious diet? And is it best, most nutritive to our souls, or conducive to the progress and triumph of the church, that the souls of men be fed with only so much of justification by faith alone as is common to us with Arminians and Pelagians? And is the normal and ideal church to be organized simply on the basis of the Apostles' Creed, as some contend, without note or comment, which Universalists cordially adopt? Surely all this is beyond the pale of argument and open questions.

Another great element in the love of the truth is consistency. This virtue involves the mutual harmony of our convic-

tions, professions, and practice. The love of the truth will strive to bring our whole being into conformity to itself. Nor will it be content that our principles, professions, or conduct should contradict the truth, which one or the other of them must do, if they contradict each other. Not only so, but consistency may have respect to the mutual relation of past and present opinions. Every upright man, as he desires to follow the truth, desires consistency between his past and present beliefs, because all truth is consistent with itself. Hence the proverb, "consistency is a jewel." But all consistency is to be discarded which is itself inconsistent with the supreme love of the truth, and with that candour which is open to all evidence that manifests the truth, even though it should disclose the error of our past opinions and the necessity of correcting them. A stubborn adherence to past beliefs against light and evidence, merely to avoid the charge of inconsistency, or the humiliation of change, is immoral and unchristian. No one can afford to claim infallibility like the Pope. No one can with a good conscience cling to his opinions from any motive lower than the love of the truth—or refuse to weigh evidence which bears against them. But we can hardly believe that any evidence can overturn intuitive self-evident truths, or the indubitable affirmations of God in his word.

And even in regard to doctrines less immediately obvious, the truly upright and consistent man will be slow to think them groundless, or to renounce them, while ready to give a fair consideration to any new evidence, or evidence before unobserved by him, to the contrary. He who is conscientious in the formation of his opinions, will look so carefully and thoroughly into their grounds, that he will not easily change them, or find them at fault. He who easily and often changes his opinions, or who changes them from any motives lower than the supreme love of the truth, is entitled to little weight, and little confidence among his fellow-men. He shows thus that he dare not trust himself. How then can he expect others to trust him? He is constantly undoing his own work and performing a process of self-negation. Unstable as water he shall not excel. True consistency is that alone which consists with and is regulated by a supreme love of the truth—equi-

distant from that trifling and volatility which are carried about by every wind of doctrine on the one hand, and from a blind and stubborn immobility against light and evidence on the other.

As already intimated, however, this view does not apply to axioms. Candour does not require us to listen to arguments to prove that two straight lines can enclose a space—that two bodies can occupy the same space at the same moment, that justice, kindness, veracity, fidelity, honesty are not obligatory, however there may be room for honest question as to the application of some of these truths. Nor does it apply to first and fundamental truths in religion, natural and revealed, which if not absolutely self-evident, are established by proofs so near it, that arguments against them deserve to be listened to, only for the purpose of refuting them, and by those whose duty it is to refute them. Such truths as the being of God, the Divine origin and authority of his word, the fall of our race, the reality and guilt of sin, the ruin of man, his need of salvation, the trinity, incarnation and redemption, the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell, the true Christian can hardly consider open questions. This is quite a different class of doctrines from those which bear upon the nature of the relation of our sin to Adam's sin, the difference between supra and sublapsarian, moral and natural inability, the precise relation of the atonement to the elect and all mankind, the mutual relation of faith and repentance. Although there is truth, important scriptural truth on these subjects, yet it is less obvious, more within the sphere of legitimate debate and controversy, and of possible new light that may give riper views, than the obligation to love God. Any pride of consistency inconsistent with the supreme love of the truth is wicked.

Veracity necessarily flows from the love of the truth. This is adherence to truth in our communications to our fellow-men, whether in word or by other signs of thought. The rule here is that our communications to others should be true in the sense in which we believe they are understood at the time of making them by those to whom we are making them. This exhausts our obligation in the premises. If we do not believe them true in the sense in which we believe the other party

understands them to be true, at the time of making them, we are guilty of conveying to him a false impression with the design to deceive. This is the essence of a lie, which is a false representation made to another with the intent to deceive. If a true representation be made to another which is believed to be false, there is the intent, form, guilt, though not the matter of a lie. But if a false communication be made which is believed to be true, then there is the matter, but not the intent and form and guilt of a lie. While we are obliged to state only the truth, as we believe ourselves understood, we are not responsible for inferences which any may make from it, especially if he be an inquisitor into secrets which he has no right to extort. Our obligations to such terminate with telling them no falsehood. We may let out as little light upon them as we please, and leave them to make their own deductions from it. Parables, allegories, tales, and the like, do not infringe upon veracity, unless they involve deception and the intent to deceive. They are at times the most effective vehicles of truth to the mind, and the employment of them for this purpose is sanctioned by our Saviour's example. Feints in war are no violations of truth, because they do not purport or promise, either directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, to convey information to the enemy. The latter is responsible for whatever construction he puts upon them. But suppose a flag of truce violated. Such an act receives and merits the instant condemnation of mankind. These are not exceptions to the obligation to speak the truth whenever we profess to convey information to our fellow-men. Here the obligation is absolute, that "putting away lying every man speak truth with his neighbour." It is the indispensable condition of confidence between man and man. When "truth is fallen in the streets equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey." Universal distrust sets man against man, and destroys the ligaments of society. Social dissolution and anarchy supervene.

And if veracity is essential to all social order and peace in secular relations, much more is it indispensable to all mutual confidence and fellowship in the church. This is a truism that hardly needs stating. Surely a man cannot be at the same

time a Christian and a liar who hath his part in the lake of fire. And yet, while no Christian can consciously or designedly practice lying, there are grades of veracity among men whose piety we would not think of questioning. There are men who are delicate and exact in their discrimination between shades of truth and falsehood; and whose conscience will not permit them to be less than scrupulously accurate. Others are duller and slower to perceive such distinctions, and have less trouble of conscience about overlooking them in their statements. All observers of men, even good men, must have observed such differences. But perhaps they are nowhere among Christians more painfully observable than among heated polemics and controvertists. No class of Christian men need to be more on their guard against this infirmity, than those who are called to the defence of what they deem the truth—lest they be left to violate the truth, thinking thus to defend it. In no way are mutual confidence, fellowship, and unity more effectually impaired.*

An eminent branch of veracity is fidelity in keeping our

* A striking illustration is afforded in the last article of the *American Presbyterian Review*, for January, 1868, in the remarks of the writer upon the Article in this Journal for October, 1867, on Dr. Duffield's account of the theology of the New-school Presbyterians. The *American Presbyterian Review* assumes that our article claimed that *all* New-school Presbyterians hold Dr. Duffield's views, and that these views comprise every distinctive doctrine of Taylorism; and that it made other groundless claims, which, of course, it makes easy work of denying and ridiculing—but which it had no shadow of pretext or excuse for imputing to that article. What it did claim, and what, as yet, there has been no attempt to disprove, was, 1. That several doctrines attributed, as late as 1863, by Dr. Duffield to the New-school Presbyterians were antagonistic to Old-school Theology, and the Confession of Faith. 2. That some of them were the doctrines of Dr. Taylor. 3. That Dr. Duffield's Article was proof that the toleration of these doctrines was within the "historic sense" in which our common standards had been accepted in the New-school body, and must, therefore, be a part of the doctrinal basis in the united church then fixed upon by the Joint Committee. The article expressed the strong hope that "this doctrinal scheme does not predominate in that (the New-school) body now." The *American Presbyterian Review*, instead of refuting, or even stating, these positions, has chosen to direct its shafts at others of its own making—with no other effect than to stir a little of the *odium theologicum* which it charges upon us. How much such criticism will do to restore that "mutual confidence" which the reviewer justly insists upon as essential to a desirable reunion, is well worthy of his consideration.

word and fulfilling our promises. A promise is the voluntary raising of an expectation in the mind of another by words or other signs of thought, that the promiser will do or refrain from doing some given thing. Every promise not only incurs the ordinary obligation of veracity in our communications to others, but is still further binding, inasmuch as, in every lawful promise, we are able to make our statements true, and have created a right in the promisee to have them made true. As in the case of veracity, promises are binding in the sense in which the promiser believed the promisee to understand them at the time of making them. By common consent of mankind promises carry the most sacred obligation, and covenant-breakers are outlaws from society, and the enemies of their kind. Where no reliance can be placed upon promises each one becomes an Ishmaelite, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him. The only circumstances that release the obligation of a promise are, first, the impossibility; secondly, the immorality of its performance; or thirdly, a release from the promisee. While impossibilities cannot be performed, yet if the impossibility were known, or, with reasonable care, might have been known at the time of promising it, there is sin in making such a promise which ought to be repented of. A promise to commit sin is better kept in the breach than the observance, else we have a short process for legitimating all iniquities. No one has a right to make, keep, or receive such a promise. The only duty of all parties to it, from first to last, is repentance. If promises are binding in the sense in which the promiser believed the promisee to understand them at the time of making them, then there can be no question in regard to one subject now agitating the nation, and, to its great disgrace and discredit, seriously disputed. We refer to the national obligation to pay its 5-20 bonds in coin. This subject is legitimately within our province, because it is not so much a matter of politics as of national morality. Corrupt and dangerous views on this subject are current among the people and politicians of both the great political parties. Whatever technical pleas may be founded on the omissions of the loan act, none are bold enough to deny that the agents and officers of the government gave the takers of the loan to understand that

it would be paid in coin; that Congress, the executive, and the country well understood this, and took no action to the contrary; that the loan would not have been taken upon any other understanding. According to every moral construction, therefore, the national faith is pledged to pay these loans in coin. Any refusal, or failure so to pay them, is consequently a breach of national faith. The more ingenious the pretexts on which the obligation is evaded, the more disastrous will be the consequences to the future credit, strength, and life of the nation.

This subject has applications both wide and obvious. Among them is the whole subject of trust-funds and endowments, given and accepted on certain conditions and for specific purposes. The moral is plainer even than the legal obligation of the trustee to abide by the compact. The class of trust-funds which more especially concern the church are those given to and accepted by her, or some of her organizations or members, for purposes of charity, and the promotion of truth and holiness, or the founding and support of her great educational or missionary institutions. The moral and Christian obligation to appropriate funds so given to the uses and upon the conditions for which they were given, is too clear to need argument. Funds given and accepted for the purpose of founding a Professorship of Divinity, conditioned that the incumbent shall teach orthodoxy and Trinitarianism, as in the case of the Hollis Professorship of Harvard, cannot be perverted to the teaching of Unitarianism, without a gross moral breach of trust, whatever may be adjudged by the civil courts. This has been the universal judgment of the Trinitarians of this country. So funds given and accepted by our Theological Seminaries, or by the General Assembly in their behalf, upon the condition, express or implied, that they shall be devoted to the inculcation of the doctrines of our Confession, as accepted by the Old-school Presbyterians, or that they shall be kept under the guardianship and administration of the Old-school Assembly, cannot be devoted to the support of contrary doctrines, or placed under the control of the adherents of contrary doctrines without a breach of faith. Nor does the mere consent of some donors always and of necessity release their donations, unless all parties consent. For there is a mutual

contract between them all as well as with the trustees. Each donor gives in view of the general conditions, which bind all, and the special conditions which each previous donor has annexed to his gifts. A release of and by all the donors, and by the trustee, may be sometimes required in order justly to release any. Any institution founded and endowed to sustain the Calvinistic system as stated in our formularies, cannot be perverted to teach contrary doctrines without a flagrant breach of trust.

The question, in what sense, or what degree of strictness creeds are binding upon those who subscribe or otherwise accept them is germane to this subject. The principles already laid down lead us to the accepted doctrine on this subject, viz., that they are binding *secundum animum imponentis*—i. e., according to the intent of the church or ecclesiastical authority imposing the creed. If the acknowledged usage of a church demands a strict subscription and full acceptance of the articles of faith as stated in her formularies, then, unless the contrary is stated at the time, assent to them means all and singular the doctrines of the formulary, as therein stated. But if the usage of a church allows laxer terms of subscription, so that those holding opposite doctrines on some of its articles are nevertheless recognized by the church as accepting them, within her meaning and intent in imposing them, as in the strong case of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, then this latitudinarian acceptance of them is not in bad faith, or the violation of any promise, however otherwise objectionable.

We are now prepared briefly to consider the relations of truth to unity in the church. Here we cannot improve, although we may explain, in itself and its applications, the grand old maxim attributed to Augustine, *In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in omnibus charitas*. In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity. The whole force of this depends on the word "essentials." Essential to what? The answer to this will disclose the corresponding liberty. Is it the truths that are essential, inasmuch as the belief of them is necessary, to Christian character? Then the correspondent unity only extends to this class of

truths, and it subsists between all real Christians of whatever name or organization. It is a unity in the essentials of Christianity, and holds between all partakers of the common salvation who themselves hold the Head, even Christ. This lays the foundation for mutual recognition, fellowship, and coöperation as Christians—having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, even as they are called in one hope of their calling. Eph. iv. Of course liberty to differ in regard to all but the essentials of Christianity is consistent with this sort of unity. But, as all history and fact show, this degree of unity is compatible with differences which are utterly incompatible with unity of church organization—and even consists with a want of outward ordinances, ministry, sacraments, as among the Friends. It is needless to specify the familiar differences on church government, ordination, sacraments, the entire range of ecclesiology, which, while they continue, utterly preclude a complete organic union between Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians. In order to unity in church organization, therefore, far more things are necessary and essential than are essential to Christianity. Still, in ways innumerable, they may not only be “all one in Christ,” but manifest their unity even in manifold forms of union and coöperation, organized and unorganized, in behalf of Christ, his cause, people, in works of faith and labours of love. Although in present ignorance and infirmity, complete organic ecclesiastical union is impracticable, “nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

But even where such ecclesiastical differences do not hinder organic unity, there may be doctrinal differences among adherents of the same polity and order which forbid complete organic union. The High and Low Church Episcopalians of this country are tending towards a separation on the ground of deep doctrinal differences. Each side profoundly earnest in its convictions of what the other denies, their organic unity forces constant and bitter contentions, which may be softened by separation, and the better opportunity it would afford for “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” In like manner the Presbyterian Church was rent in

twain thirty years ago by similar causes, and with a visible growth of peace and unity between the two bodies ever since, till they are now earnestly negotiating to see if the way be clear for organic reunion. There are not only the doctrines essential to Christianity; but those which, being scriptural, are essential to the integrity, strength, defence, and conservation of the Christian system. Those who earnestly believe it essential to the due support of Christianity, that the doctrines of Calvinism as set forth in our Confession, should be preserved intact and entire as against opposing systems, cannot in conscience promote organic union on a basis which admits to the ministry those who reject these doctrines and espouse the contrary. While they may coöperate in other ways with Presbyterians of a different mind on this subject, they can hardly advocate founding an ecclesiastical organization which provides for a ministry who shall teach the contrary of what they believe essential to the integrity, fulness, and strength of the religion of the Bible, and of the doctrinal system of their symbols.

Moreover, what may not be essential on general grounds as a basis of mere ecclesiastical organization and unity, may in some cases be essential to it for the faithful administration of certain trusts which any branch of the church has accepted. If funds have been bestowed on the condition that they should be controlled by a body maintaining certain doctrines, then that body forfeits them if it consents to changes whereby these funds shall be administered in the interest of opposite doctrines. If the funds given during the last thirty years to institutions on the express condition that they should remain under the supervision of the Old-school Presbyterian General Assembly, and true to the doctrines of that church, then that church and those institutions cannot become antagonistic to these doctrines, without forfeiting the moral right to those funds. If they were given and accepted on the understanding that they should be devoted to that type of Christianity known as Old Calvinism, in opposition to Taylorism and the like, then it becomes essential to the moral right of the Assembly to retain these funds, that it should not organize or reorganize upon a basis that allows the advocates of these antagonistic systems

to control them. And on this further ground, it is essential to our moral integrity that doctrinal unity be required, not only to the extent of what is essential to Christianity, but of what is essential to the system known as Calvinism. This too, not as permitting whatever others say or think, is not inconsistent with what they mean by Calvinism or Reformed Theology, but as excluding what we and those who entrusted their funds, understood at the time of our accepting them, to be essential to the system set forth in our Confession.

Complete organic union can result in peace and edification only when it is founded on agreement in doctrine and polity in matters deemed by the parties essential to the integrity of the scriptural system. Such a union, first among all Presbyterians, and then among all Christians, is a consummation devoutly to be wished. We hail the signs which foretoken its near approach. But premature forcing of the form of outward unity, before a sufficient oneness of doctrinal and ecclesiastical principles has been attained, will only hinder and delay the real blessing we seek, and for which we trust God is preparing the way. It will give an Ishmael and not an Isaac, the real child of promise. For a union that is cemented by truth and love let us labour and pray without ceasing till all obstacles are overcome. And may God hasten it in his time!

ART. II.—*On the Study of the Mathematics as an Exercise of Mind*:—(Discussions on Philosophy, &c.,* Am. ed. pp. 257–324):—By Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart., Prof. of Logic and Metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh.

By all candid scholars, the just reputation of Sir William Hamilton for wide and accurate erudition is frankly acknowledged. His attainments in ancient and modern learning,—if we except the departments of Oriental languages, of mathematical and physical science, and technology,—have probably not been equalled since the days of the younger Scaliger. His

* This essay appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, as a reply to a pamphlet "On the Study of Mathematics," by the Rev. Wm. Whewell, M. A., of Trinity College, Cambridge.