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Geo. Henry Jones.
ART. I.—*Recent Commentaries on the Song of Solomon.*

Das Hohelied untersucht und ausgelegt, von Franz Delitzsch, Dr. u. ord. Prof. d. Theologie zu Erlangen u. s. w. 1851. 8vo. pp. 237.

Das Hohelied von Salomo, uebersetzt und erklärt, von Heinrich August Hahn, Dr. Phil. Lie. Theologie und ausserordentlichem Professor der letzteren an der Königl. Universität zu Greifswalden, u. s. w. 1852. 16mo. pp. 98.

Das Hohelied Salomonis ausgelegt, von E. W. Hengstenberg, Dr. und Prof. d. Theologie zu Berlin. 1853. 8vo. pp. 264.

The Song of Solomon, Compared with other parts of Scripture. Second Edition. London, 1852. 16mo. pp. 230.

A Commentary on the Song of Solomon, by the Rev. Geo. Burrowes, Prof. in Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. 1853. 12mo. pp. 527.

It is remarkable that such a number of Commentaries upon this brief and difficult book should have appeared within so short a period, and in places so remote from each other. This circumstance, if it be not purely casual, resulting from the accidental direction of the studies of the individuals whose productions we have before us, would seem to indicate an extensive leaning in the church at present towards the study of the Can-

Heidelberg to Dantzick, he had to remain eight days in Frankfurt, because there was no Dantzick trader there. From Basle to Dordrecht is now a journey of two days. But the four Swiss commissioners in 1618, partly in a four-horse coach, with an armed guard, and partly by water, took twenty-one days, and received from the government two hundred ducats for expenses. Moreover, these peregrinations were not intermitted during the thirty-years-war. The answer to the question is first this: there were in certain universities fixed travelling bounties, as for instance, at Copenhagen to the amount of three thousand rix-dollars. Then there were benefactions of princes, nobles, and other patrons. Calovius received from the Prussian estates three hundred and thirty dollars, for travelling. Winkelmann was sent abroad by his landgrave. Many went as *compagnons de voyage*. In some cases, especially in Holland, the stranger made something by private lessons. But we must withhold our hand, and advise those who need fuller details to resort to the original volume.

Richard H. Stoddard.

ART. III.—*Character and Writings of Pascal.*

Pensées de Blaise Pascal sur la religion, et sur quelques autres sujets. Paris: Chez Lefèvre, et Compagnie. 1847.

Lettres écrites à un Provincial, par Blaise Pascal. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot Frères. 1849.

WHAT reader of ecclesiastical annals does not feel a tender interest in the history of the Jansenists; follow their progress through successive years; mark their efforts for the maintenance of the truth; sympathize with them under their sufferings; and view with admiration their heroic constancy?

The author of this kind of schism in the Romish Church was Cornelius Jansenius; at first Professor of Divinity in the University of Louvain, and afterwards Bishop of Ypres—a man of acknowledged erudition, unwearied activity, and fervent piety. The greater part of his life had been devoted to the

preparation of a work, termed *Augustinus*, which was completed on the day of his death. Its doctrines were presented, for the most part, in the words of Augustin, a father, whose name and authority were universally revered. It contains a luminous exposition of the Pelagian controversy; an account of the opinions of Augustin respecting the powers of human nature, in its original, fallen, and renewed state, and of his sentiments on the sacrifice of Christ, the aids of the Holy Spirit, and the eternal predestination of men and angels—all arranged with perspicuity, enforced by argument, and exhibiting an able defence of those doctrines which, in our times, have usually been distinguished by the term, *Calvinistic*, or *Evangelical*.

Scarcely had the work made its appearance, before it was assailed with the bitterest venom by the Jesuits, who had previously exerted their influence to effect its suppression, and who regarded it as a silent, but formidable attack upon their doctrines concerning human liberty, and divine grace. They not only opposed the work, and traduced the character of the author, but with rancorous malice pursued his remains to the grave, demolished the splendid monument which his friends had erected over him, tore his body from the sepulchre, and threw it into some unknown receptacle. With the same spirit they sought a public condemnation of the work at Rome, and succeeded. The reading of it was prohibited in the year 1641, and in the following year, Urban VIII. condemned it by a solemn bull, as infected with dangerous errors.

The advocates of truth and the friends of the Bishop, denominated from him *Jansenists*, though exposed to suspicion and odium, had increased in considerable numbers, in France, Holland and Belgium. No sooner was the Papal bull published and an attempt made to enforce it, than the most ruthless persecution commenced. Excommunication, fines, cruel banishments, and rigorous imprisonments were every where inflicted. The state-prisons were thronged; threats of fire and of poison were loudly uttered, and, in some instances, executed; the Bastile was crowded with unhappy victims, who entered only to suffer, and who never came out alive. Some wandered about in disguise; others expired in going to foreign countries,

worn out with fatigue and anxiety, praying fervently for their afflicted brethren, and still more affectionately for their persecutors. It was an age of martyrdom, when many were "persecuted for righteousness' sake," and were "blessed;" when the "doctrines of grace" were warmly advocated by those whose motto was, "we will defend the truth, if necessary, to the death;" when multitudes nobly struggled in opposition to error, and cheerfully submitted to every species of suffering, rather than deny their Christian faith. In her long roll of martyrs, history records the names of none who suffered with greater constancy, or in a nobler cause.

Port Royal was the fountain whence Jansenism had spread over France; it was made so by St. Cyran, who presided over it, who had aided largely in the composition and publication of the treatise *Augustinus*; and who exerted himself to build up a society for the maintenance and promulgation of the principles of that book. Two houses went under this name, forming but a single abbey—one situated at Paris, the other about six leagues from the city, in a gloomy forest, termed Port Royal Des Champs. This last community differed from a monastery in not being bound by vows: settled in a farm adjoining the convent called Les Granges, it was a kind of literary hermitage, where the time of the recluses was divided between devotion and the cultivation of letters, relieved by mechanical arts and agricultural labours. Here many resorted, some of rank and fortune, to enjoy a sacred retreat from the world. Here sound literature was assiduously cultivated; here men who deserve well of the republic of letters composed works adapted to improve the mind and heart; here youth were taught the rudiments of language and the principles of science; and to this day the Port Royal Grammars, and other classical works, are appreciated and studied. It was alike renowned for its religious fame. Here the Holy Scriptures were supremely revered and diligently studied, and amid some superstition, which we as Protestants cannot approve, there was a steadfast adherence to sound doctrines, united to the exhibition of pious virtue. The corruption of the human heart, the consequent necessity of its renovation by the Holy Spirit, the reference of salvation, in all its relations, to the infinite mercy of

God, through the merits of Christ, were the prominent topics which were taught and embraced. For many years it stood, in the midst of its enemies, a splendid example of profound learning and Christian purity; it shone as a light in the midst of darkness; its fame went abroad through the land, and its influence extended to other countries. Several generations of its peaceful inhabitants had indeed perished amid persecution and trial; but others continued to arise imbued with the same spirit. It continued thus to flourish—"the ear that heard it blessed it;" the "eye that saw it bore witness" to it, until its adversaries, the Jesuits, were at length permitted to triumph, and complete "the measure of their iniquity."

In October 1709, it was entirely destroyed, and its innocent inhabitants were imprisoned for life, in separate monasteries. Few of them long survived their dispersion; they were compelled to remove under circumstances of peculiar cruelty, and soon expired from the hardships of their journey and the ill usage in their prisons. The vengeance of their enemies was wreaked even on the buildings which they had occupied, the sacred edifice where they had worshipped, and the silent tombs where their dead had been interred. The monastery and the adjacent church were entirely overthrown; workmen, hired and prepared for the purpose, rifled the graves in which the recluses of former times were resting; with wicked ribaldry, and outrages too disgusting to be repeated, they piled up a loathsome heap of bones and corpses, on which the dogs were permitted to feed. What remained was thrown into a pit, prepared for the purpose, near the neighbouring churchyard of St. Lambert.

But though the institution has fallen, and its light is extinguished, yet it shall never be forgotten; its memory shall always be blessed. The pious traveller, in visiting Versailles, will turn aside to the dark and gloomy vale, where it once stood, to view its few hallowed remains, and tread the consecrated spot, so sacred to genius, to piety, and to virtue. It shall never be forgotten. Many of its friends and patrons were such as reflected honour upon its cause; their learning, piety and usefulness, gave it a reputation which, in so small a body, and in such a period of its existence, is wholly unexampled. The

names of Arnauld, Nicole, Tillemont, Lancelot, Racine, Saci, Quesnel, Le Maitre, Fontaine, Rollin, and others, have conferred immortality upon Port Royal which will ever keep it in grateful remembrance.

But a more splendid genius than any of these was PASCAL—that “prodigy of parts,” as Locke calls him—a name that is associated with all that is splendid in the highest order of talent, and all that is bright and pure in the practice of holiness. Though he did not formally unite himself with Port Royal, yet he was on terms of strict intimacy with its inmates, spent much time in their society, wrote several of his works while among them, possessed similar tastes and feelings, espoused their doctrines, took part in their controversies; and, for this reason, has been generally regarded as of their order. A formal biography of Pascal we do not design giving—it will be sufficient to advert to a few facts of his history.

He was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, on the 19th of June, 1623. His father, Stephen Pascal, was a man distinguished for his talents and virtues; an eminent lawyer, first President in the Court of Aids, and also an able mathematician and natural philosopher. Having been afflicted with the loss of a wife whom he tenderly loved, he determined to devote the remainder of his life to the education of his three children; and, to fulfil this design, he resigned his office in the year 1631, and removed to Paris. There the young Pascal was subject to the immediate care and attention of his learned and judicious parent, and under his instruction, gave early indications of an uncommon capacity. As soon as he could speak intelligibly, his remarks were pertinent and interesting, and his inquiries new and striking; and while he exhibited a fund of knowledge far beyond his age, his reasoning faculties rapidly increased with his advancing years.

His sister, Madame Perier, tells us what were the methods pursued by the father in the education of his son; how at an early age, he wished to cultivate his taste and improve his memory; how he instructed him in the Greek and Latin languages, and gave him a general view of their nature and signification; how he taught him the import and application of grammatical rules; and how he adopted other methods of in-

struction, well worthy of the attention of those who have the charge of youth.

While the youthful pupil was deriving the highest advantage from the books that were given to him, he conversed much with his father on such subjects of natural philosophy as were calculated to interest his attention; they were such as he delighted to consider, and wished to understand; he would never be satisfied with the bare recital of an experiment, but required a reason for every thing that was presented. With that ardent love of truth and inquisitive turn of mind, which he possessed from his childhood, he applied his powers of understanding to the subjects proposed, and pursued the investigation, until he had acquired a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. On one occasion, anxious to know the reason of a phenomenon which he had seen and heard, he commenced a course of experiments upon sounds, and conducted the investigation with so much success, that at twelve years of age, he composed a treatise on Phonics, remarkable for its ingenuity and correct reasoning. Everybody has heard how at the same age, without a master and without books, he may be said to have invented a part of Geometry, which had cost many years of efforts to the ancients; how his father discovered him in his chamber solving a problem, which was no other than the 32d proposition of the first book of Euclid, without his knowing the name of a single figure. His parent could no longer restrain a mind endowed with such powers; he gave him Euclid's Elements for his hours of recreation, and was delighted to find him, at that tender age, reading it by himself, without need of assistance or explanation. He continued the study of mathematical science, and made such rapid progress, that at the age of sixteen he composed a Treatise on Conic Sections, which displayed an extraordinary effort of mind, and evinced a strength of reasoning and knowledge of science, fully equal to anything that had appeared. These extraordinary attainments, which would have perfectly intoxicated any ordinary man, he bore with humility and modesty; neither pride nor vanity found admission into his youthful heart.

These and other similar circumstances in the early life of Pascal, have been the occasion of much discussion, and of some

incredulity; but the evidence of truth is so strong that it cannot be resisted. Similar appearances in the lives of other men are recorded, and well authenticated. Bacon not only understood, but criticised the works of Aristotle, at fifteen years of age. Maignan, without any instruction, became an able mathematician at the age of eighteen years. Picus, Earl of Mirandola, was a prodigy of learning, even in childhood; and Grotius and Usher, at the same period, were eminent for their attainments in literature. Fontenelle composed a Latin poem at thirteen years of age, which gained a public prize at Rouen. Clairaut was only fifteen years old, when he published a treatise on Quadratures, which obtained the praise of the French Academy, and astonished the mathematical world. To come nearer to our own times, Robert Hall, before he was nine years of age perused and re-perused with intense interest, Edwards on the "Affections," and on the "Will;" and at the same early period read, with a like interest, "Butler's Analogy."

We shall not dwell, however, upon the attainments of Pascal in mathematical and philosophical science; his invention of the arithmetical machine; the principles of the calculation of chances, and the method of solving the problems respecting the cycloid. We shall not enter into details, in showing how he finally determined the great question which divided the opinions of the world, concerning the pressure of the atmosphere; or how he was the first to establish, by mathematical process, the general laws of the equilibrium of fluids. We proceed to consider his *religious* character. However eminent he was as a mathematician, a philosopher, and a general scholar, he was still more elevated when, in addition to these distinctions, he was adorned with the dispositions, and animated with the hopes of the Christian. Towards the end of the year 1647, he experienced a paralytic affection in both his legs, which almost deprived him of the use of them for nearly three months. While thus suffering, he was led to employ much of his time in reading books of piety. It was the period when it pleased God to impress his mind with a deep sense of the nature and obligations of Christianity, and of the necessity of devoting himself supremely to his service. The impres-

sion was so strong, that his former pursuits lost, in his sight, much of their apparent excellency; his literary reputation and triumphs he regarded as nothing; and he unhesitatingly resolved to consecrate the remainder of his life entirely to his God. An incident which occurred about this time—a narrow escape from sudden death—tended to deepen his impressions and confirm his resolutions. To carry his design into effect, he retired for a time from the city, and resided in the country; there he studied the Holy Scripture, diligently examined the subject of its inspiration, and after a patient investigation, was fully convinced of its truth, and of the necessity of believing all that it reveals. It is truly delightful to see such a mind as Pascal's coming to such a conclusion; to behold a capacious and inquisitive genius animated by an ardent desire to penetrate the mysteries of natural science, and requiring a reason for every object of philosophical inquiry, yet restraining his curiosity within the boundaries of physical truth, and receiving the word of God with childlike submission and simplicity. This simple belief of the truth contained in Scripture, solely because it is a divine revelation, governed the tenor of his future life, and directed the course of all his studies. He used often to say, "in the Scriptures, whatever is an object of faith need not be an object of reason." He regarded it also as a practical book, from which we are to learn the spirit and genius of Christianity—a book which, he more than once said, "was the science not so much of the *understanding* as of the *heart*—intelligible only to those whose heart is right, the reading of which should therefore be accompanied with prayer for the Holy Spirit." With such views, he studied the sacred volume, and acquired a knowledge of its contents, and a facility of quoting it, unusual at that day; he everywhere recommended it to his friends, and exercised the powers of his mind in demolishing everything that tended to deform its truth. Thus acting, he made as astonishing progress in religion, as he had before done in science. Those very circumstances which tended to retard his pursuits in philosophy, favoured his attainments in piety, so that he was wont to say, "in pursuing human science, sickness retards my progress; but since my present business is to teach lessons of heavenly wisdom, afflic-

tions accelerate my advancement." A devotion so sincere and fervent, an example of holy conduct so edifying, kindled, as it were, a flame in the whole family; his father was willing to listen to his discourses, and to regulate his life by the pious maxims of his son; his younger sister, of fine understanding and brilliant genius, was so impressed by the conversation of her brother that she renounced the world, with all its distinctions, and devoted herself to the service of God in the monastery of Port Royal. He himself, after the death of his father, attracted by its devotion and spirituality, so far attached himself to this institution, as to seek there an occasional retreat from the world; there, in the cells of the city, or in the silent shades of "Des Champs," he produced the two works, which are at the head of our article.

His "*Pensées*," or "*Thoughts on Religion*," originated in a design to write a work on the Evidences of the Christian Religion. It was written at the close of his life, when his last years were a succession of the acutest sufferings; but during this interval, his thoughts were so bright, his love of truth so ardent, and his benevolence so tender, that he wished to appear in a new department—not so much as a controversial, as a contemplative moralist; not as the advocate of a particular body of Christians, but the champion of Christianity itself. Persuaded that something of this kind was needed, he collected and arranged materials for a work which was designed to show the necessity of a divine revelation, and to demonstrate the truth, reality, and advantage of the Christian religion. When his design was known, he was requested by some persons of distinction and learning, to exhibit a general view of what he was preparing. Pascal complied with their wishes. His discourse was continued for nearly three hours, in which were displayed a grandeur of conception, a cogency of argumentation, an extensive range of learning, and a profound skill in theology, that were truly astonishing and delightful. Kindling as he proceeded, this great master of style delineated his scheme with all the grace of a rich and noble eloquence, and produced such an overpowering effect upon his auditors, as led them to declare, that the lapse of many years could not extinguish the emotions, or efface the impression of

that memorable day. It must ever be lamented that an undertaking so comprehensive and well-concerted was not carried into execution. Very much that he invented or collected on this subject was confided to the mere care of his memory; but we rejoice to know that a part has been preserved; that these "Thoughts," found after his death, written on separate pieces of paper, and tied up in bundles, without order or arrangement, were fragments of the matter which he designed to use. Some of them, particularly in the first part, have no relation to the subject; but with these exceptions, there are few passages which ought not to be considered as materials kept in reserve for the monument which was about to be prepared. But small and incomplete as is the work, it is a mine of profound thought and evangelical piety, which deserves to be explored. The ideas and sentiments, only partially evolved, and imperfectly developed, display an intellect of surprising energy and expansion, a richness and novelty of illustration, a depth and pregnancy truly admirable—all expressed in a style terse and simple, and abounding with examples of that serene eloquence which becomes the philosopher and the Christian.

From the "Thoughts" themselves, and from what his friends who heard his discussions have said, it was the design of Pascal to establish the Divine authority of the Scriptures from their *internal* evidence; especially from their peculiar suitability to man, and the strong claim which, on this account, they have upon him.

He begins by telling us what man is. Of the weakness and corruption of human nature, as exhibited in Scripture, and presented in our conduct, he makes an enlarged survey—not however with the exulting triumph of a satirist, but rather with the tenderness of a Jeremiah, weeping over the sins of his nation, and pointing out the ruin with which they are threatened. However weak in intellect, and degraded in heart, man is not contemptible. "He is so great," says Pascal, "that his greatness appears even in the consciousness of his misery. A tree does not know itself to be miserable. It is true there is misery in knowing one's self miserable; but there is greatness also. Thus all man's miseries prove his greatness. They are the miseries of a mighty potentate, of a dethroned

monarch." He then directs us to the height from which man has fallen, and shows us that his misery is aggravated, because of that innocence and peace which he has lost; and his grief greater, because of the recollection of that happiness which was once enjoyed. "What man is unhappy because he is not a king, except a king dethroned? Was Paulus Æmilius considered miserable that he was no longer consul? On the contrary, every one thought that he was happy in having it over, for it was not his condition to be always consul. But Perseus, whose permanent state should have been royalty, was considered so wretched in being no longer a king, that men wondered how he could endure life. Who complains of having only one mouth? Who would not complain of having but one eye? No man mourns that he has not three eyes, yet each would sorrow deeply if he had but one." He thus seeks to humble man only that he may exalt him; to point out the frailty and wretchedness of his condition, only that his attention may be diverted from it, and fixed upon the splendours of the life to come. If such had not been his design, the exhibition would have been not only vain, but injurious—as he says: "It is dangerous to show man unreservedly how nearly he resembles the brute creation, without pointing out, at the same time, his greatness. It is dangerous also to exhibit his greatness exclusively, without his degradation. It is yet more dangerous to leave him ignorant of both, but it is highly profitable to teach him both together. I blame with equal severity those who elevate man, those who depress him, and those who think it right merely to divert him. I can approve of those only who seek in tears for happiness. The Stoics say: Turn in upon yourselves, and there you will find repose. This however is not true. Others say—Go forth from yourselves, and seek for happiness. Neither is true. Disease will come. Alas! happiness is neither within us, nor without us—it is the union of ourselves with God."

On such subjects Pascal had reflected deeply, and expressed himself strongly. With tender sympathy, with humanity, he rebukes those who would leave man in this state of misery and corruption, without attempting relief, and represents their unbelief, not so much the offspring of a disordered understand-

ing, as of a polluted heart.—“What advantage is it to us to hear a man say that he has thrown off the yoke; that he does not think that there is any God who watches over his actions; that he considers himself the sole judge of his conduct, and that he is accountable to none but himself? Does he imagine that we shall hereafter repose confidence in him, and expect from him consolation, advice, succour, in the exigencies of life? Do such men imagine that it is any matter of delight to us to hear that they hold that our soul is but a little vapour or smoke, and that they can tell us this in an assured and self-sufficient tone of voice? Is this then a thing to say with gayety? Is it not rather a thing to be said with tears, as the saddest thing in the world?”

Having shown man as he is, and the utter inefficacy of infidelity to bring relief, Pascal brings the doctrines of the Scriptures as adapted to his moral nature; and hence infers that it is altogether impossible that Christianity should be a fiction—a mere product of human artifice. He shows that however other systems may be suited to angels, or to ideal men, or to solitary philosophers, or to dry moralists, the Christian religion is alone suited to the wants and miseries of fallen man. This religion he does not consider sufficient to present as simply true; he announces it as a system of truth of the highest importance and absolute necessity, as alone capable of scattering the clouds which oppress the mind respecting the origin, condition, and destiny of man; as alone able to soothe and alleviate the multiplied sorrows of life; as alone qualified to shed lustre and brightness through the gloomy avenues of death, and to communicate to the heart of the dying, light, and animation, and joy. In his hand, Christianity appears, not as a mathematical problem, beautiful and true, but yet cold and selfish—unconnected with the happiness of man; but like its Divine Author, living and active; and everywhere “doing good.” How finely in the following passage does he describe the God of the Scriptures, and aim to enkindle a love for him, and a taste for spiritual objects. “The metaphysical proofs of the being and attributes of God are so complicated, obscure and remote from the ordinary modes in which men reason, that they leave a feeble and transient impression; and

even when the mind is most affected by them, this continues only during the short period that the demonstration is distinctly apprehended. The conviction is often momentary, and they suspect that they have been imposed upon. The Divine Being of the Christian is not a God who is merely the author of geometrical truths, and of the order and arrangement of the elements—this is the god of Paganism. Nor is he only a God who superintends the lives and fortunes of men by his providence, bestowing a large and happy course of years upon those who adore him—this is the Divinity of the Jews. But the God of Abraham and of Jacob, who is the God of the Christian, is a God of love and consolation; who fills the heart and replenishes the soul of which he takes possession; penetrating it with a deep sense of its own misery, and of his infinite mercy; a God who unites himself to the centre of the soul, filling it with humility, joy, confidence, and love; and thus rendering it unable to repose on any object but himself, as its supreme and ultimate end. The God of the Christian is a God who causes the soul to feel that he is its only good; that he is its only rest; and that it can have no joy but in loving him; and who teaches it, at the same time, to abhor every obstacle to the full ardour of that affection.” He represents Christ as the whole life and spirit of the renewed man; as attracting, charming, and winning the heart of the sinner—“To know God as a Christian, a man must know his misery and unworthiness, and the need he has of a Mediator, by whom he may draw near to God and be united to him. These two branches of knowledge must not be separated, for when separated, they are not only useless, but injurious. The knowledge of God, without the knowledge of our ruin, is pride. The knowledge of our ruin, without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is despair. But the knowledge of Christ delivers us both from pride and despair, because in him we discern at once, our God, our guilt, and our only way of recovery. We may know God without knowing our wretchedness, or our wretchedness without knowing God; or both without knowing the way of deliverance from those miseries by which we are overwhelmed. But we cannot know Jesus Christ, without knowing at once our God, our ruin, and our remedy; because he is not merely God,

but God, *our Saviour*. Hence, those who seek God without the Saviour, will discover no satisfactory or truly beneficial light. For they never discover that there is a God, or, if they do, it is to little purpose; because they devise to themselves some way of approaching that God whom they have discovered without the aid of a Mediator; and thus they fall into atheism, or deism, two evils equally abhorrent to the Christian system. We should therefore aim exclusively to know Jesus Christ, since by him alone can we expect to obtain a divine knowledge. Without him, man must remain in sin and misery; in him, man is delivered from them both. In him is treasured up all our happiness, virtue, life, light, and hope; out of him, there is nothing for us but sin, misery, darkness, and despair."

We have not space for other quotations. We might direct the reader to other truths equally affecting and as strongly expressed—seen through the fine colouring of fancy and feeling—the beautiful *contrast between Mahomedanism and Christianity—the peculiar style of the Evangelists—the character of Jesus Christ—the marks of true religion—comparison of ancient and modern Christians*, and other passages of like character.

To derive benefit from this little work, a work which Arnold has ranked among "the greatest master-pieces of human genius," we must read it again, and again—we must *study* it; and remembering that it is only a fragment, think out the train of thought which the author has suggested, and fill up the chasms which he has every where left.

Our unqualified approbation of the whole work is not to be expected; there are sentiments to which we cannot assent, arising from that system of faith in which the author was educated, and which, notwithstanding his high regard for the authority of Scripture, exerted an influence over him; sentiments on the subject of miracles, the character of the church and some of its ceremonies, auricular confession, and the benefit of that extravagant austerity and voluntary suffering, of which he was so painful an example, at the close of his life. Neither can we be perfectly satisfied with the very dark view of human life which he presents. Though upon the whole, it is

just, yet we cannot but think that it is tinctured with too sombre colours; that the sad and gloomy portrait might be softened and relieved. Addison makes a judicious remark; "to consider the world as a dungeon, and the whole human race as so many criminals, doomed to execution, is an idea of an enthusiast; to suppose the world to be a seat of delight, where we are to expect nothing but pleasure, is the dream of a Sybarite." Both extremes are to be shunned. But Pascal seemed not to avoid the first. Though the world is a wilderness, in which we see every where the ruins of human happiness, yet we may truly say that it wants not green spots and hidden treasures. Our nature has the capacity of deriving happiness from the many sources which a kind Providence has given us; scattered every where as the memorials of Him who does not "willingly afflict," even the "evil and unthankful;" who regards judgment as his "strange work;" and who is pleased to remember, bless, and watch over, a world, by which he is insulted and forgotten.

But the work from which Pascal derives his highest reputation is his *Provincial Letters*, written several years before his "Thoughts on Religion." It originated in a long and tedious controversy between the Jesuits and the Jansenists. The former drew up the far-famed "five propositions" on the mystery of Divine grace, and contended that they were found in the book of the Bishop of Ypres; sent them to the Pope, and exerted such power at Rome, that Innocent X. condemned them as heretical.* To the authority of the Holy See, Arnauld and his friends implicitly leaned. But a question was asked—Were the objectionable propositions to be found in the book? Arnauld declared that he had studied it from beginning to

* This is a brief view of these celebrated Propositions—they were as follows:

1. That some commandments of God are impracticable, even to the righteous, who desire to keep them, according to their present strength.
2. That grace is irresistible.
3. That moral freedom consists, not in exemption from necessity, but from constraint.
4. That to assert that the will may resist or obey the motions of converting grace, as it pleased, was a heresy of the semi-Pelagians.
5. That to assert that Jesus Christ died for all men without exception, is an error of the semi-Pelagians.

end, and could not find them there; his enemies, the Jesuits, as strongly asserted the contrary. Hence the ever-memorable distinction that was maintained of the *droit* and the *fait*—the *droit* being the justice of the Pope's censure, which all Catholics admitted—the *fait* being the existence in the Augustinus of the censured Propositions, which all the Jansenists denied. In the midst of this contention, a conclave of Parisian doctors decreed that the five Propositions were in the book—a Papal bull affirmed the sentence—and then, a second conclave required all the ecclesiastical and religious communities of France to subscribe their assent.

While the Jesuits were thus triumphing, their joy was at once converted into dismay, when a new champion suddenly appeared, the most formidable that had yet entered the field. But while they were filled with uneasiness and fear, Port Royal hailed with transport an ally, who, to their own sanctity of manners, and to more than their own genius, added popular arts, to which they could make no pretension.

On the 13th of January, 1656, just before the sentence of condemnation was passed upon Arnauld,* appeared the first of Pascal's "Provincial Letters," or, as they were then called, "Letters written by Louis de Montalte, to one of his friends in the country." The others, eighteen in number, were published successively, at intervals of several weeks' duration, for more than a year and a half. The work was anonymous, and the greatest care taken to preserve the secret within the circle of a few personal friends. None but they knew Pascal to be the author, nor was the fact generally known and published, until after his death. It was not hastily composed—the author was often employed twenty days on a single letter; one, the eighteenth, he wrote over more than thirteen times—and all, after being written, he transmitted to Arnauld and Nicole, to be carefully revised and corrected—a proof of the toil that is needed to secure perfection in writing, and of the fact, that more than genius is necessary to attain, in this respect, high and permanent success.

* He was condemned for maintaining that Peter fell, because, at the time of his fall, "Divine grace was suspended or withdrawn from him." The proposition was pronounced "rash, impious, blasphemous, accursed, and heretical."

We shall not stop to speak of the literary merits of the work—they have been universally acknowledged. The most distinguished French critics unite in pronouncing it a perfect model of taste and style, which has exerted a powerful influence on the literature of succeeding times. Those of other countries who are acquainted with it unite in bearing the same testimony; all agree that it is a master-piece of the most wonderful acuteness and subtlety of genius, united with the keenest satire and the most delicate wit; an example of the precision of mathematical reasoning, joined with the most convincing and persuasive eloquence. The more it is studied as a literary work, the more we must be ready almost to adopt the language of Boileau, that “nothing surpasses it, in ancient or modern times.”*

The grand design of Pascal, in these Letters, is, not merely to defend persecuted innocence, but also to display the corrupt maxims and policy of the Jesuits. Influenced by a pure zeal for the morality of the gospel, he was induced to take up his pen, in opposition to a system which struck at the foundation of all Christian duty, and to expose it, not merely to theologians, but in such a manner, by his language and pleasantry, as would make it seen and felt by the great body of the people.

In the first three letters, he examines the points of dispute involved in the trial of Arnauld. He exposes the fraudulent alliance between the Jesuits and the Dominicans; he shows how the two contracting parties covered up their fundamental differences of opinion by an abuse of language, using phrases which either had no meaning at all, or involved the grossest contradictions. The Dominicans had always maintained the doctrine of “efficacious grace” necessary for any good action; and asserted that human liberty does not consist in indifference, but is compatible with a certain kind of necessity, which springs from the irresistible power of divine grace. The Jesuits, who are the followers of Molina, denied both these dogmas, and affirmed the existence of “sufficient grace,” and “immediate power” to do good, or to abstain from it, without any extraneous aid. Their allies employed the same phrases,

* “Pascal surpasse tout ce qui l’a précédé, ou suivi.”—Lettres de Mme. de Sévigné.

but attached to them a different meaning, understanding that the powers spoken of were of no effect, without the additional aid of the Spirit. They covenanted to use these technical words, without any reference to the sense which the Molinists attached to them, on condition that the Jesuits would not oblige them to declare their whole meaning, and would continue to assert that the doctrines of the Thomists were orthodox. Here was fine scope for the pleasantry and sarcasm of Pascal on the dogma of "sufficient grace," which was not sufficient for the performance of a pious work; and of "immediate power," which was of no avail, except by special and Divine assistance.

Nothing could be better adapted to secure his object than the well-concerted means which he used.—In quest of information in the city of Paris, Montalte meets with a Jesuit; from this father he makes inquiries respecting the theological disputes then in vogue, receives from him satisfaction on every topic, learns the contrivances which the casuists are employing for the defence of their maxims, proposes doubts and objections, which are obviated and answered; and at length calls out all the tenets of the Society, and all the policy it is pursuing.

By the adoption of the epistolary style, which admits of freedom, and throwing most of the arguments into the form of a dialogue, he introduces with ease and grace the happiest repartee; he renders an abstruse and perplexed controversy intelligible to his readers; and even amuses and entertains them, as with a well-wrought comedy. Yet his wit is tempered with the greatest kindness; no gall is mingled with his pleasantry; it cannot be said of him as was said of Machiavel in his comedy—"His laughter at men is but the laughter of contempt." On the contrary, all his invectives show that he takes no delight in inflicting pain, and that he employs them only as a reluctant tribute to the love of truth.

In the succeeding letters, from the fourth to the eleventh, he exhibits the maxims of the Jesuits, and shows that they are subversive of all true principles of morality, religion, and civil government. He gives, there is no doubt, a just delineation of their character. It was the object and effort of this Society

to subjugate the whole world to its influence. To effect this design, science and learning were patronized, but morality and virtue were only secondary; ritual ceremony was insisted on, but purity of heart and life dispensed with—if they could not make men saints, they did the best to prevent them from regarding themselves as sinners—so mild was their law of the confessional—so wide the confines of its exemptions, permissions, and dispensations. Not that their *design* was to corrupt mankind—it was only to “keep pace with the age”—to render obedience to the Church as easy as their license could make it. So says Pascal, in his fifth letter—“Their *object* is not the corruption of manners—that is not their design; neither is it their sole aim to reform them—that would be bad policy. Their idea is briefly this—they have such a good opinion of themselves as to believe that it is useful, and in some sort essentially necessary to the good of religion, that their influence should extend everywhere, and that they should govern the consciences of all. The severe maxims of the gospel being best fitted for managing some sorts of people, they avail themselves of these, when they find them favourable to their purpose: but as these maxims do not suit the views of the great bulk of the people, they waive them in the case of such persons, in order to keep on good terms with all the world. Accordingly, having to deal with persons of all classes, and of different nations, they find it necessary to have casuists fitted for this diversity.”—But though such was not their object, yet the inevitable tendency of their doctrines was to corrupt mankind.

Quoting from their writers of established reputation, such as Escobar, Busenbaum, Bauny, Molina, Filiutius, Lessius, and others, Pascal accumulates a long list of decisions, and shows how their doctrines annihilate all morality. According to these decisions, not to will the commission of a sin, as such, affords ground for excuse; the sinner has the more reason to hope for pardon, the less he thought of God in the perpetration of the deed, and the more violent the passion by which he was impelled; custom, and bad example, as they restrict the freedom of the will, avail as an apology. Other grounds of excuse were freely admitted. Duelling is forbidden by the

laws of God and the Church ; but the Jesuits maintain that if any one run the risk of being deemed a coward, or of losing a place, or of forfeiting the favour of his sovereign, by avoiding a duel—in that case he is not condemned if he fight. To take a false oath, in itself, is a grievous sin ; but, say these casuists, he who swears outwardly, without inwardly intending it, is not bound by his oath ; for he does not swear, but jest. The doctrine of “probability” is another strong example of perverted principle. In doubtful cases, a person might disregard the scruples of his conscience and follow the authority of a single writer, if one could be found who maintained that the desired course of conduct was not unlawful. If there is a conflict of authors, the opinion held by any one of them must be deemed probable ; and we are at liberty to select the most indulgent teacher, and to follow the easiest opinions, even though their soundness be not certain. Again, transgression is no longer heinous, if the intention be directed only to the innocent qualities of the act, while its sinful characteristics are put aside and forgotten. In this way, a slight turn of the thoughts was held to exonerate from guilt. Thus simony is forbidden ; but if a person give money for a benefice, not in order to bribe the bestower, but to gain a means of more effectually serving the Church, he is blameless. A man may kill another who gives him a blow, or even publishes a libel against him, provided he does not act from the spirit of hatred or revenge, but only with a view to retrieve his injured honour.

Such were the maxims of the Jesuitical casuists ; such the mantles which they had provided with which to cover the greatest enormities. Acute and subtle in their reasonings, they reduced their false morality to a system, and framed rules for their guidance in the practices of confession and absolution ; made void all law and obligation by the force of casuistry ; changed the essence of things, and made sin to be no sin ; forced immutable truth to yield to logical subtilities, and stubborn virtue to bend to corrupt inclinations and interests. These rules and principles were the necessary consequence of the position which they assumed, and the mission they were to accomplish. They aimed to subdue the world ; and if they could effect it in no other way, they would do it in conforming

to its spirit; if the arms of the gospel were insufficient, they would borrow weapons from the evil one; if they could not succeed by appealing to the nobler instincts of humanity, they would make skilful use of the baser appetites and passions; if they would injure their cause by practising the lax system of ethics which they preach, they would be irreproachable in their morals, and even austere in their conduct—thus occasioning the sarcastic remark that “they purchased heaven very dearly for themselves, but sold it on very cheap terms to their converts.”

Such is the system which Pascal happily exposes; a system at which every moral heathen would blush; which Epictetus, Seneca, and Cicero, would be ashamed to avow.* He clearly proves that such are their doctrines by appealing to their books, and citing the pages where the extracts are found; he cites those works only which are of high repute among them, which were adopted as guides in the confessional chair, which had passed through many editions, and which had the “approbation, license, consent and approval” of the order. Escobar’s *Treatise on Moral Theology*, so often quoted, went through forty editions; and more than fifty editions were published of the writings of Busenbaum. He could not be justly accused of making false quotations, or of tampering with evidence so as to produce a false impression. He himself says: “I was asked if I repented of having written my *Provincial Letters*; I reply, that far from having repented, if I had to write them now, I would write them yet more strongly. I was asked why I have given the names of the authors from whom I have taken all the abominable propositions I have cited. I answer, that if I lived in a city where there were a dozen fountains, and I certainly knew that there was one which was poisoned, I should be obliged to advertise all the world to draw no water from that fountain; and as they might think that it was a pure imagination on my part, I should be obliged to name him who had poisoned it, rather than expose all the city to the danger of being poisoned by it. I was asked why I employed a pleasant, jocose, and diverting style. I reply, that if I had written in a

* Any one of them would have said:

“Non ego mendosos ausim defendere mores.”

dogmatical style, it would have been only the learned who would have read, and they would have had no necessity to do it, being at least as well acquainted with the subject as myself. Thus I thought it a duty to write, so as to be comprehended by women and men of the world, that they might know the danger of those maxims and propositions which were then universally propagated, and of which they permitted themselves to be so easily persuaded. I was asked, lastly, if I had myself read all the books I have cited. I answer, No; for in that case it would have been necessary to have passed my life in reading very bad books; but I had read through the whole of Escobar twice, and for the others, I caused them to be read by my friends. But I have never used a single passage without having myself read it in the book cited, or without having examined the subject on which it is adduced, or without having read both what precedes, and what follows it, in order that I might not run the risk of quoting what was, in fact, an objection for a reply to it—which would have been censurable and unjust.”

In all this exposure, do we see any thing in Pascal which has the appearance of vindictiveness over a vanquished foe? No! if there be resentment, it is at the error, rather than at the person; if there be at times an indignation rising to the tone of awful majesty, there is mingled with it a philanthropy most tender and heart-felt; he would take the men to his bosom and reform them, while he consigns their impious doctrines to destruction. What he says to the unsuspecting monk, when taking leave of him, is the expression of his benevolent soul to all the Jesuits—“Open your eyes, at length, my dear father, and if the other errors of your casuists have made no impression on you, let these last, by their very extravagance, compel you to abandon them. This is what I desire from the very bottom of my heart, for your sake, and for the sake of your doctors; and my prayer to God is, that he would vouchsafe to convince them how false the light must be that has guided them to such precipices—my fervent prayer is, that he would fill their hearts with that love of himself from which they have dared to give man a dispensation.”—What he uttered on his deathbed was the motive which prompted him in

all his controversies—"As one about to give to God an account of all his actions, I declare that my conscience gives me no trouble on the score of my Provincial Letters; in the composition of that work, I was influenced by no bad motive, but solely by regard to the glory of God, and the vindication of truth, and not in the least by any passion, or personal feeling against the Jesuits."

In the eleventh letter, Pascal throws off his disguise, and addresses himself directly to the whole order of the Jesuits, and to their Provincial, whom he names; abandons himself to the impetuosity of his nature, and pours out his soul in a torrent of declamation. He had prepared us for it by his previous letters. He had pursued the enemies of truth into their lurking-places; he had drawn them out to the light of day; he had exposed their frightful mass of corruption; he had laid open their doctrines of "probability" and "mental reservation;" he had proved, in the clearest manner, that they justified malice, revenge, extortion, simony, uncharitableness, duelling, murder, and almost every other crime. And now, like an orator who has measured his forces, and who perceives that his auditory has become docile under his reasoning, and waits only to be agitated by passion, he pours out his impassioned feelings, applies himself directly to the enemies of truth, shows them the face of a judge, inexorable and terrible; accuses, condemns, overwhelms them. Wrath and indignation breathe in his words—they are the words of Pericles that sting—they are the invectives of Cicero, or rather of Demosthenes, in his Philippics. We are agitated and carried along with him; we are roused to resentment, and enkindled with detestation, while we see him throwing his whole soul against doctrines which exempt us from all love to God, and all love to man. We forget Port Royal and the Jansenists; we view him only as the friend and defender of man—the advocate of Christianity and morals.

On the subject of homicide, he shows how far the casuists had departed from Scripture and reason; and inspires us with perfect horror of their opinions.—"Everybody knows that, according to the laws of the land, no private individual has a right to demand the death of another individual; and that

though a man should have ruined us, maimed our body, burnt our house, murdered our father, and was prepared to destroy our character and even to assassinate us, yet our private demand for the death of that person would not be listened to in a court of justice. Public officers have been appointed for that purpose, who make the demand in the name of the king, or rather, I should say, in the name of God. But according to your modern system of legislation, there is but one judge, and that is no other than the offended party; he is, at once, the judge, the party, and the executioner. He himself demands from himself the death of his enemy; he condemns him, he executes him on the spot; and without the least respect either for the soul or the body of his brother, he murders and damns him, 'for whom Christ died;' and all this for the sake of avoiding a blow on the cheek, or a slander, or an offensive word; or some other offence of a like nature, for which, if a magistrate, in the exercise of legitimate authority, were to condemn any to die, he would himself be impeached; for in such cases the laws are very far indeed from condemning any to death. In a word, to crown the whole of this extravagance, the person who kills his neighbour in this manner, without authority, and in the face of all law, contracts no sin and commits no disorder. Where are we, fathers? Are these really in the sacred office—even priests, who talk in this manner? Are they Christians? are they Turks? are they men? or are they demons? Are these 'the mysteries revealed by the Lamb to his society?' or are they not rather abominations suggested by the 'Dragon' to those who take part with him. To come to the point with you, fathers, whom do you wish to be taken for? for the children of the gospel, or for its enemies? You must be ranged either on the one side or on the other. 'He that is not with me,' saith the Saviour, 'is against me.' These two classes are in the world, and into these all mankind are divided. There is the class of the children of God, who form one body, of whom Jesus Christ is the king and head; and there is another class, at enmity with God, of whom the devil is the king and the head. Jesus Christ has imposed upon the Church, which is his empire, such laws as he, in his wisdom, was pleased to ordain; and the devil has imposed on

the world, which is his kingdom, such laws as he chose to establish. Jesus Christ has associated honour with suffering; the devil, with not suffering. Jesus Christ has told those who are smitten on the one cheek to turn the other also; the devil has told those who are threatened with a buffet to kill the man that would do them such an injury. Jesus Christ pronounces those happy who share in his reproach; and the devil declares those to be unhappy who lie under ignominy. Jesus Christ says, 'Woe unto you when all men speak well of you;' and the devil says, Woe unto those of whom the world does not speak with esteem. Judge then, fathers, to which of these kingdoms you belong. You have heard the language of the city of peace, the mystical Jerusalem; and you have heard the language of the city of confusion, which Scripture terms the spiritual Sodom. Which of these two languages do you understand? which of them do you speak? Those who are on the side of Jesus Christ have, as St. Paul teaches us, 'the same mind which was in him;' and those who are the children of the devil, who has been a 'murderer from the beginning,' follow the maxims of the devil. Let us hear then the language of your school. I put this question to your doctors—When a person has given me a blow on the cheek, ought I rather to submit to the injury than kill the offender? or may I not kill the man in order to escape the affront? 'Kill him, by all means,' they say, 'it is quite right.' Is that the language of Jesus Christ? One question more—Would I lose my honour by tolerating a box on the ear, without killing the person who gave it? 'Can there be a doubt of it,' cries Escobar, 'that so long as a man suffers another to live, who has given him a buffet, that man remains without honour?' Yes, fathers, without that honour which the devil transfuses, from his own proud spirit, into that of his own proud children. This is the honour which has ever been the idol of worldly-minded men. For the preservation of this false glory, of which 'the god of this world' is the appropriate dispenser, they sacrifice their lives by yielding to the madness of duelling; their honour, by exposing themselves to ignominious punishments; and their salvation, by involving themselves in the peril of damnation—a peril which, according to the canons of the Church, deprives

them even of Christian burial. To impress your minds with a still deeper horror at homicide, remember that the first crime of fallen man was a murder committed on the person of a holy man; that the greatest crime committed on earth, was a murder, perpetrated on the person of the King of saints; and that of all crimes, murder is the only one which involves, in a common destruction, the Church and the State, nature and religion. Much more apparent must the contrast of your principles be with ecclesiastical laws, which are incomparably more holy than civil laws, since it is the Church alone that knows and possesses true holiness. Accordingly, this chaste spouse of the Son of God, who, in imitation of her heavenly Husband, can shed her own blood for others, but never the blood of others for herself, entertains a horror at the crime of murder, altogether singular, and proportioned to the peculiar light which God has vouchsafed to bestow upon her. She views man not simply as man, but as the image of the God whom she adores. She feels for every one of the race a holy respect, which imparts to him, in her eyes, a reasonable character, as redeemed by an infinite price, to be made the temple of the living God. And, therefore, she considers the death of a man, slain without the authority of his Maker, not a murder only, but as a sacrilege, by which she is deprived of one of her members: for whether he be a believer or an unbeliever, she uniformly looks upon him, if not as one, at least as capable of becoming one, of her own children."

In the same impassioned manner, he speaks on another subject—after showing that men are released from love to God, by the principles of the Jesuists, he says indignantly—"The license which they have assumed amounts to a total subversion of the law of God. They violate 'the great commandment, on which hang all the law and the prophets;' they strike at the very heart of piety; they rob it of the spirit that giveth life; they hold that to love God is not necessary to salvation; and go so far as to maintain that this 'dispensation from loving God is the privilege which Jesus Christ has introduced into the world.' This is the very climax of impiety. The price of the blood of Jesus Christ paid to obtain for us a dispensation from loving him! Before the incarnation, it seems men were obliged

to love God; but since 'God has so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son,' the world, redeemed by him, is released from loving him! Strange divinity of our days—to dare to take off the 'anathema' which Paul denounces on those who 'love not the Lord Jesus Christ'—to dare to cancel the sentence of St. John; 'he that loveth not, abideth in death'—to dare to nullify the declaration of Christ himself; 'he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings!'—and thus to render those worthy of enjoying God through eternity, who never loved him during their life! Behold 'the mystery of iniquity' fulfilled!"

Equally eloquent is he on the subject of their calumny and slander.—"Too long, by far, have you been permitted to deceive the world, and to abuse the confidence which men were ready to place in your calumnious accusations. It is high time to redeem the reputation of the multitudes whom you have defamed. For what innocence can be so generally known, as not to suffer some injury from the daring aspersions of a body of men scattered over the face of the earth, and who, under religious habits, conceal minds so utterly irreligious, that they perpetrate crimes like calumny, not in opposition to, but in strict accordance with their moral maxims? I cannot, therefore, be blamed for destroying the credit which might have been awarded you; seeing it must be allowed to be a much greater act of justice to restore to the victims of your calumny the character which they did not deserve to lose, than to leave you in the possession of a reputation for sincerity which you do not deserve to enjoy. And as the one could not be done without the other, how important is it to show you to the world as you really are!—Your Society is so thoroughly depraved as to invent excuses for the grossest of crimes, such as calumny, that it may enjoy the greater freedom in committing them. There can be no doubt that you would be capable of producing abundance of mischief in this way, had God not permitted you to furnish, with your own hands, the means of preventing the evil, and of rendering your slanders perfectly innocuous; for, to deprive you of all credibility, it was quite enough to publish the strange maxim, that it is no crime to calumniate. Calumny is nothing, if not associated with a high reputation for honesty.

The defamer can make no impression, unless he has the character of one that abhors defamation, as a crime of which he is incapable. And thus, fathers, you are betrayed by your own principle. You established the doctrine to secure yourselves a safe conscience, that you might slander without risk of damnation, and be ranked with those 'pious and holy calumniators,' of whom St. Athanasius speaks. To save yourselves from hell, you have embraced a maxim which promises you this security on the faith of your doctors; but this same maxim, while it guarantees you, according to their idea, against the evils you dread in the future world, deprives you of all the advantages you may have endeavoured to reap from it in the present state; so that in attempting to escape the guilt, you have lost the benefit of calumny. Such is the self-contrariety of evil, and so completely does it confound and destroy itself by its own intrinsic malignity. You might have slandered, therefore, much more advantageously for yourselves, had you professed to hold with St. Paul, that no revilers nor slanderers shall inherit the kingdom of God; for in this case, though you would indeed have been condemning yourselves, yet your slanders would at least have stood a better chance of being believed. But by maintaining, as you have done, that calumny against your enemies is no crime, your slanders will be discredited, and in addition, you yourselves damned. For two things are certain, fathers—first, that it will never be in the power of your grave doctors to annihilate the justice of God; and secondly, that you could not give more certain evidence that you are not of the truth, than by resorting to falsehood. If the truth were on your side, she would fight for you—she would conquer for you; and whatever enemies you might have to encounter, 'the truth would make you free' from them, according to her promise. But you have had recourse to falsehood, for no other design than to support the errors with which you flatter the children of this world, and to bolster up the calumnies with which you persecute every man of piety who sets his face against these delusions. The truth being directly opposed to your ends, it became you, to use the language of the prophet, to 'put your confidence in lies.' You have said—'the scourges which afflict men shall not come nigh to us; for

we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' But what says the prophet, in reply to such—'Forasmuch as ye have put your trust in calumny and tumult, this iniquity and your ruin shall be like that of a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly—in an instant. And he shall break it, as the breaking of the potter's vessel, that is shivered in pieces'—with such violence that 'there shall not be found, in the bursting of it, a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.'—'Because,' as another prophet says, 'ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and ye have flattered, and strengthened the malice of the wicked; I will therefore deliver my people out of your hands; and ye shall know that I am their Lord, and yours.'—Yes, fathers, it is to be hoped that if you do not repent, God will 'deliver out of your hands' those whom you have so long deluded, either by flattering them in their evil courses with your licentious maxims, or by poisoning their minds with your slanders. He will convince the former that the false rules of your casuists will not screen them from his indignation; and he will impress on the minds of the latter the just dread of losing their souls by listening and giving credit to your slanders, as you lose yours by producing these slanders and disseminating them through the world. 'Be not deceived—God is not mocked.'"

What burning indignation does he pour forth, united with the tenderest sympathy, when defending Port Royal—the spot so dear to him—where dwelt his best friends, his loved sister and niece—the retreat of prayer, the nursery of science, the refuge of religious liberty. As yet the Jesuits had only impugned it with rancorous calumny and slander. How would Pascal have written, could he have foreseen their future conduct to the venerable institution! But he was "taken from the evil to come," and removed to the world "where the wicked cease from troubling," two years before their bloody decrees were executed. After referring to the slander, as one of the basest that ever issued from their Society, he says—"Here is a calumny worthy of yourselves—here is a crime which God alone is capable of punishing; which you alone are capable of committing. To endure it with patience would

require a humility as great as that of those calumniated females; to give it credit would demand a degree of wickedness, equal to that of their wretched defamers. I propose not, therefore, to vindicate them; they are beyond suspicion. Had they stood in need of defence, they might have commanded an abler advocate than I am. My object in what I say here is to show, not their innocence, but your malignity. I merely intend to make you ashamed of yourselves, and to let the world understand that, after this, there is nothing of which you are not capable. You will not fail, I am certain, notwithstanding all this, to say that I belong to Port Royal; for this is the first thing you say to every one who combats your errors: as if it were only there, that persons could be found possessed of sufficient zeal to defend, against your attacks, the purity of Christian morality. I know, fathers, the work of the pious recluses who have retired to that monastery, and how much the Church is indebted to their truly solid and edifying labours. I know the excellency of their piety, and learning; I know some of them personally, and honour the virtue of them all. But God has not confined within the precincts of that Society all whom he means to raise up in opposition to your corruptions. I hope, with his assistance, fathers, to make you feel this; and if he vouchsafe to sustain me in the design he has led me to form, of employing in his service all the resources I have received from him, I shall speak to you in such a strain as will, perhaps, give you reason to regret that you have *not* had to do with a man of Port Royal. To convince you of this, fathers, I must tell you, that while those whom you have abused by this notorious slander content themselves with lifting up their groans to Heaven, to obtain your forgiveness for the outrage, I feel myself obliged, not being in the least affected by your slander, to make you blush in the face of the whole Church, and so bring you to that wholesome shame of which the Scripture speaks, and which is almost the only remedy for a hardness of heart like yours—‘Fill their faces, O Lord, with shame, that they may seek thy name.’ Nothing less will satisfy your rage than to accuse the Port Royalists of having renounced Jesus Christ, and their baptism. This is no air-built fable, like those of your invention; it is a

fact, and denotes a delirious frenzy. Such a notorious falsehood as this your Society has openly adopted; you have maintained that Port Royal has, for the space of thirty-five years, been forming a secret plot, 'to ruin the mystery of the incarnation—to make the gospel pass for an apocryphal fable—to exterminate the Christian religion, and to erect Deism upon the ruins of Christianity.' But whom do you expect to convince, upon your simple asseveration, without the slightest shadow of proof, that ministers who preach nothing but the grace of Jesus Christ, the purity of the gospel, and the obligations of baptism, have renounced at once their baptism, the gospel, and Jesus Christ? Who will believe it? Wretched beings as you are, do you believe it yourselves? What a sad predicament is yours, when you must either prove that they do not believe in Jesus Christ, or must pass for the most abandoned calumniators. Cruel, cowardly persecutors! Must the most retired cloisters afford no retreat from your calumnies? While these consecrated virgins are employed night and day, according to their institution, in adoring Jesus Christ in the sacrament, you cease not, night nor day, to publish abroad that they do not believe that he is either there, or even at the right hand of the Father; and you are publicly excommunicating them from the Church, at the very time when they are interceding for the whole Church, and offering up their prayers for you! You blacken with your slanders those who have neither ears to hear, nor mouths to answer you! But Jesus Christ, in whom they are now hidden, who will one day appear publicly as their friend, hears you, and answers for them. At the moment I am now writing, that holy and terrible voice is heard, which confounds nature and consoles the Church. And I fear, fathers, that those who now harden their hearts, and refuse, with obstinacy, to hear him, while he speaks in the character of God, shall one day be compelled to hear him with terror, when he speaks to them, in the character of a Judge."

In this manner, bold, fearless, declamatory, with strength, and fire, and elevation, he inveighs against the corrupt principles and iniquitous conduct of the Jesuits. And they feel it—they who had made kings tremble, tremble themselves before the majesty of Pascal. They know not who he is, or whence

he comes; they feel the thunders, but perceive not who discharges them. As he says—"You feel yourselves smitten by an invisible hand, but a hand that shall make your crimes visible to all: and in vain will you attempt to strike at me in the dark, through the sides of those with whom you suppose me to be associated. I fear you not, either on my own account, or on that of any other; being bound by no tie, either to a community or an individual. All the influence which you possess can be of no avail in my case. From this world I have nothing to hope, nothing to dread, nothing to desire. Through the goodness of God, I have no need of any one's money, or any one's patronage. Thus I elude all your attempts to lay hold of me. You may touch Port Royal if you choose, but you shall not touch me. You may turn people out of the Sorbonne, but that will not turn me out of my domicile. You may contrive plots against priests and doctors, but not against me, for I am neither the one nor the other. You perhaps never had to do with a person so completely beyond your reach, and, therefore, so admirably qualified for dealing with your errors—one perfectly free—one without engagement, entanglement, relationship, or business of any kind—one, too, who is pretty well versed in your maxims, and determined, as God shall give him light, to discuss them, without permitting any earthly consideration to arrest or slacken his endeavours."

If we judge of eloquence by its effects, then the Provincial Letters were truly eloquent. They were "the handwriting on the wall" against the Jesuits; and the people interpreted it, "thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." When published separately, each letter was read with attention and effect; but when collected into a volume, and published by the Elzevirs, they produced a mighty impression; they were eagerly read by men, women, and children; they opened their eyes to see with surprise this monstrous combination of permitted crimes with the most wicked policy. They were speedily translated into the Latin, the Spanish, and the Italian languages, and widely spread through all the nations of Europe. All the efforts made to suppress them served only to promote their popularity; though they were censured at Rome, and burned by the executioner at Paris, yet they acquired such

credit and authority among the people, and took such deep root in their minds, as to bid defiance to all power, civil and ecclesiastical.

From that moment the Society degenerated, the necessary consequence of a full discovery of its principles. It hastened to its dissolution; and if the Provincial Letters were not the means of its extinction, they certainly accelerated its doom. Busenbaum, Bauny, and other "moralists" of the Society, tended to cover them with suspicion and scorn; the finger of shame was raised with impunity and pointed against them; the appellation of Jesuitism was a synonyme for chicanery and deception; the name of the principal casuist introduced into the French language a word, *escobarder*, which means to *prevaricate* or *shuffle*.* It is hard to contend against ridicule and ignominy, when they are widely spread and justly deserved. Under this weight, the Jesuits sunk; they became obnoxious to the principal powers of Europe, and gradually fell. They were expelled from Portugal in 1759; from France in 1764; from Spain in 1767; and on the 21st of July, 1773, they were suppressed by the Papal bull.

Was this act on the part of the nations of Europe just? All history declares that it was; that they had by their own conduct unwittingly prepared themselves for destruction; that the various nations which expelled them acted only in self defence; that their arrogance and presumption were such that they would not be good subjects; that their principles now revealed, and their rules of order now made known, tended to overthrow religion and morals, society and government. It was clearly ascertained, that in more than one instance, they aimed to establish an independent empire; that they urged the entire supremacy of ecclesiastics over civil magistrates; that they contended that the chiefs of the clergy should be not only at the head of the Church, but also at the head of the State. It was found that they had taken part in almost every intrigue and revolution; that they had exerted the influence obtained

* "Le nom de ce Jésuite fournit même à notre langue, un verbe familier, *escobarder*, qui n'est pas plus honorable pour l'auteur qui l'a fait naître, que le mot de Machiavélisme n'est flatteur pour la mémoire de Machiavel."—Neufchâteau—Du style de Pascal.

in different courts only for evil; that in almost all the great events that occurred, they were responsible for the pernicious consequences that ensued. It was found that they had been propagating a system of relaxed and pliant morality, which accommodates itself to the luxury of the age and the passions of men, which destroys the distinction between virtue and vice, which justifies flagrant crimes, which authorizes every act which the most crafty politician would desire to perpetrate. It was no longer doubtful that the books of their casuists tolerate and even recommend the horrible crime of regicide—to be effected, according to some, by the steel; according to others, by poison; according to others, through the confessional. It was a Jesuit that assassinated Henry III., King of France; and a distinguished casuist of that order, Mariana, eulogized the murderer—“lately has been accomplished in France a great and magnificent exploit, and Clement, in killing the king, has made for himself a great name.” Ravailac, the infamous murderer of Henry IV., acknowledged that he was instigated to the bloody deed by “the seditious discourses and writings of the Jesuits.” They were the Jesuits who denied the right of Elizabeth to the throne of England, promoted insurrections against her, and attempted so often to take away her life. They were the Jesuits who prepared and were ready to execute the gunpowder plot for the destruction of the English king and parliament. They were the Jesuits who assassinated William, Prince of Orange. They were the Jesuits who forced Louis XIV. to revoke the edict of Nantz; who could never prevail with him, while in health, to injure his Protestant subjects, but who took advantage of his diseased body and agonized conscience, to constrain him to do an act which it was intimated was necessary for his salvation—an act with which he was never satisfied, the responsibility of which he threw upon them, on his death-bed—“if indeed you have misled and deceived me, you are deeply guilty; for in truth, I acted in good faith; I sincerely sought the peace of the church.”—They were the Jesuits, who directed and planned that awful tragedy in France, the massacre of St. Bartholomew; and which the professors of their college in Paris openly applauded. They were the Jesuits who incited the families of Tavora and

D'Aveiro to assassinate Joseph I., King of Portugal; three of their doctors deciding, that "to kill a king is not a mortal sin." They were the Jesuits who carried into Oriental Asia a false and perverted gospel; who bore a "right-intentioned" imposture, and scattered the seed of deception, that was to fructify to the salvation of souls; who imitated the Brahmans in many of their Pagan rites; who, in preaching Jesus Christ, concealed his humiliation; who, in a land of pearls and precious stones, of pomp and show, presented him surrounded by the offerings of the Magi, working mighty miracles, transfigured upon the mount, ascending triumphantly into glory; but who refused to exhibit him born in poverty, "despised and rejected of men," scourged at Gabbatha, crucified on Calvary; who esteemed it "expedient," in order to induce the heathen to embrace religion, to represent Christianity without a cross, and its Author without suffering. They were the Jesuits, who, in their church of St. Ignatius at Rome, had painted on the walls subjects drawn from the Old Testament, which they presumptuously perverted, illustrative of their corrupt principles and murderous propensities,—Jael, impelled by a Divine spirit, driving a nail into the head of Sisera—Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes—Samson massacring the Philistines, by order of the Almighty—and David slaying Goliath—above these, their saint, darting forth flames on the four corners of the world, with these words of the New Testament—"I came to set fire to the world; and what would I but that it be kindled."

With such acts as these, and with such maxims as would make any crime safe to the conscience, it is not wonderful that they should have brought upon them universal hatred and opprobrium; that their oppressive yoke should have been indignantly thrown off; that they should have been expelled from more than thirty countries and places during their career.

But still they were not disbanded; they elected one Grouber as their general, and went on as usual. Obtaining an asylum in Silesia, through Frederick, King of Prussia; and an establishment in Russia, through the Empress, Catharine II., they struggled on, the ghosts of their departed

greatness—in reduced numbers—with diminished resources, and an exhausted credit; yet stimulated by the hope of future achievement. Through toils and sufferings, amid individual and national opprobrium, with the thunders of the Vatican directed against them, they persisted with wonderful energy of mind and body, full of the expectation of success. For forty years they thus persevered; and at length, by the order of the Pope, they were restored, in 1814, to their former privileges—thus showing that the emblem of the Phœnix, rising from its ashes, had not been chosen by them in vain.

It is an important question, Is the system of the Jesuits the same now as it once was? *are their doctrines those that are exposed in the "Provincial Letters?"* These letters have been subject to a sifting process of the closest examination; and it has never been proved that the extracts were garbled, or falsified; on the contrary, there is the fullest testimony of strict fidelity in all the quotations. Have the Jesuits, at any time, rejected these writers, and opposed Escobar, Hurtado, Salas, Busenbaum, and others? Have they forbidden them, as standard works, in the cases of casuistry and conscience? Are their young confessors warned against them, and prohibited from receiving them for their instruction and guidance? No! with obstinate tenacity they still cling to them, and publicly avow and defend them; not a single principle, however wicked; not the smallest claim, however destructive; not a single regulation, however nefarious in malignity, corruption, and despotism, has ever been denied. Thus viewed, the Provincial Letters are eminently useful to *us*. Though written two hundred years ago; though there is now no Arnauld to vindicate, or Port Royal to defend; though the party of the author has been scattered and ruined; though his discoveries in science are forgotten, because of new progress that has been made; yet this work deeply concerns *us*, as containing a faithful exposure of an atrocious system of morals which existed in his day, and which is essentially the same now. The overwhelming ridicule, managed with so much propriety and taste, and connected with such acute reasoning and powerful eloquence, has rendered it, as the far-sighted Nicole predicted, an "immortal"

work, always to be read—never to be forgotten.* What obligations then are we under to Pascal for the bold and fearless exposure of this system—and what an important service has he rendered to the general interests of humanity!

There was a time, however, when it seems this book was but little read. Dugald Stewart refers to it in his “Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy.” After speaking highly of the work, he adds—“I cannot help, however, suspecting that *it is now more praised than read*, in Great Britain; so completely have those disputes, to which it owed its first celebrity, lost their interest.” That time, however, has passed away; the Jesuitical controversy has not “lost its interest;” what Pascal has written on this subject is now examined with attention and read with delight; in his own country, new and improved editions are published, to which attention is directed by Michelet, and Quinet, no friends of the Jesuits; in Great Britain new translations have been made; and in our own country, edition after edition has issued from the press; showing that, at this interesting crisis, it is *not* “more praised than read.” While there is such excitement on the subject of Jesuitism, the people, anxious to know its principles, will delight to view the lively and faithful picture here given, and will be amused and astonished, and yet pained, by the extravagances and errors which it maintains.

To this conclusion, that Jesuitism is the same now as it was in the days of Pascal, we have been slowly brought. In reading what its ablest advocates have said against the Provincial Letters; in consulting some of its works of casuistry; in examining the “Spiritual Exercises,” and the “Constitutions of the Order,” left by their founder, and containing their rules and regulations, we are convinced that there has been no essential change; that their opinions of “intention” and “probability,” of “expediency” and “mental reservation” are the same; that they may still act upon the principle that “the end sanctifies the means;” that they may now say, in truth, what they

* “Lorsque tout cela ne sera plus, la censure tombera, et peut-être que la mémoire n’en sera conservée que dans les écrits de Montalte *qui ne périront jamais.*”

Note sur la première lettre des Provinciales.

avowed some years ago—"thanks to the Divine bounty, the mind which animated the first Jesuits belongs also to us, and through the same assistance, we hope never to lose it; nor is it a slight testimony in our favour, that no one of us has varied or gone back; our consistency will always remain."*

We must not, however, confound Romanism with Jesuitism, and suppose that the advocates of the former approve, and act upon the principles of the latter—we must not forget that Catholics themselves first revealed the chicanery and pious fraud of these pretended reformers, and that, following in the footsteps of Pascal, others, of the same faith, have pursued the subject, added still more testimony, and brought fully to light this once hidden "mystery of iniquity." It is neither honourable nor Christian, to charge upon *all* the ecclesiastics and members of the Romish Church, the abominations of Jesuitism. Though it must be granted that the Romish Church must bear the odium of the restoration and patronage of this nefarious Society.

Another question—Will the Jesuits, now in active operation, ever attain the power, influence, and glory which they once possessed? They, no doubt, will pursue the same system of ethics, and scruple at no means to advance their end; they will exhibit the same features of intolerance and ambition, and aim at supreme ascendancy; they will intermeddle with the affairs of civil government, in whatever country they may be; they will manifest the same industry, and indomitable perseverance; but will they ever attain the success which they did in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Will they ever again be the confessors of the greater part of kings and monarchs; ever again be the spiritual guides of so many persons of rank and power; ever again become possessed of the highest confidence in courts? Will they ever again obtain the chief direction of the education of youth, form their minds while they are young, and retain an ascendancy over them

* We do not refer to the "*Monita Secreta, or Secret Instructions for the Company of Jesus*"—for its authenticity has been denied by them. They maintain that it was written by an expelled Jesuit, Zaorowski, who published it, to cover his disgrace and gratify his revenge. It was condemned by the Roman Index, in 1616, in a congregation, held in the palace of Cardinal Bellarmine. Many however believe that it was written by Aquaviva, one of the generals of the order.

when in years? We think not.—The novelty which once existed has passed away, and will no longer influence multitudes to enlist under the banner that is spread—*ad majorem Dei gloriam*—to the greater glory of God. The secrecy which once characterized this order has been taken away. For two centuries, Europe felt the fatal effects of its ambitious power; but it could not discern the cause. It was a fundamental maxim with the Jesuits, from their first institution, not to publish the rules of their order; these they kept concealed as an impenetrable mystery; these they never communicated to strangers, nor even to the greater part of their own members; these they refused to produce in courts of justice. But in the last century, during the prosecutions against them in France, Portugal, and other countries, they were so inconsiderate, so wanting in their ordinary policy, as to produce these mysterious volumes. By such authentic records, the principles of their government may be known; and while their past acts are remembered, the sources from which they flowed can be ascertained with certainty and precision. This is no slight impediment to their future success. Besides, the very constitution and genius of their society is a spirit of intrigue and deception—it is known to be such—and if it be true that “honesty is the best policy,” the maxim will apply to ecclesiastical orders as well as to individuals. They may flourish for a time and do much mischief, but they must ultimately fail; they may for a time interfere in the concerns of those countries where they are, but they will never, we think, again convert or rule nations; because they are dishonest, they must sooner or later, effect their own destruction.

It is impossible for us to state precisely the number of Jesuits now in the world—probably not less than eight or ten thousand, and though they may possess the craft of their forefathers; yet they are evidently far inferior to them as men of science, authors, and teachers. Driven out from several other countries, they seem to be concentrating their force, at this moment, in Great Britain, and in our country, engaged in their secret schemes and machinations. We know not what number there are among us, nor where they are located—it is a part of their policy to conceal such facts; but we know that

they are in our land, possessing a system of morals, and pursuing a policy, similar to what was professed and prosecuted in the time of Pascal.

They seem to be peculiarly fitted for this "age of action," and for this country of "energy and enterprise." The object of this monastic order is different from that of all the other orders of the Romish church. The latter are called to work out their salvation by extraordinary acts of mortification, seclusion from the world, and secret piety and prayers. The Jesuits, on the contrary, were created for "action;" they are "chosen soldiers," bound to exert themselves in the service of the Papacy; they appear in no processions; practice no rigorous austerities; consume no time in repetition of tedious formularies; but are required to attend to the transactions of the world, on account of the influence which these may exert upon religion; to study the dispositions of persons in high rank, and gain their favour and friendship; and to pay special attention to the education of the young. Their form of government is such, that all the members must necessarily be "working men"—they have a spirit of industry and perseverance, an invincible effort in prosecuting their plans, a continued struggling, stimulated, not only by the hope, but by the resolution, of achievement. This has characterized them in every age; and upon this principle we can account for their having been, in one respect, generally irreproachable in their morals. Their system required continued exertion; they were so incessantly engaged in bodily and mental work, that they were freed, in a degree, from those propensities which idleness produces.

Such are the men who are in the midst of us; who are as active agents as they were from their origin; who, though they may not be seen, are labouring as indefatigably as did their fathers. Varying their policy, to suit our free institutions, they will strive here as they have done in other countries, to gain popularity, by their accommodating code of morals, especially among the influential and powerful; to take advantage of political excitement; to divide the Protestant denominations, and array them against each other; to ingratiate themselves with the poor, and secure the contributions of the rich; to pursue a system of espionage peculiar to them-

selves; to establish schools and seminaries, with "gratuitous instruction;" to monopolize seats of learning; and to glide with noiseless steps, into offices of influence and importance. While we do not fear them, we should be ever on our guard against such men; men who are hostile to all who condemn their religious errors, or oppose their political pretensions; men who always work in the dark, and scruple not to make use of any means to accomplish their ends; who, as Pascal says, "cannot move a step, without stratagem and intrigue." We should feel what another of his Church, De Pradt, has said—"Human society is fearfully menaced by the atrocious revival of the order of the Jesuits, and by the introduction of their principles, which engender and promote every private and public collision, disorder, and crime. *Away with the Jesuits!*"

Charles Hodge.

ART. IV.—*The Conflict of Ages; or, The Great Debate on the Moral Relations of God and Man.* By Edward Beecher, D. D. Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co. 1853. pp. 552.

THE opinion expressed in our last number concerning this work, founded on a very slight inspection, has been abundantly confirmed by a careful perusal. It is characterized by great ability, by an earnest spirit, by frankness, candour, and courtesy. It is the result of long continued thought and research. It presents with clearness the various conflicting theories by which men have tried to explain the great problem of sin. And although, from the plan of the work, the author is obliged to travel more than once over the same ground, his book is, in the main, condensed and logically ordered. With all these recommendations, it cannot fail to command and to repay attention.

It has a special interest for us. We hail it as an ally. The author shuts his readers up to the choice between orthodoxy and the doctrine of pre-existence. He admits that Scripture, Christian experience, and facts, are all on our side. He acknowledges that the Church has the Bible and its own con-