

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY 1839.

No. I.

ART. I.—*Life of Joseph Brant Thayendanegea: including the Border Wars of the American Revolution, and Sketches of the Indian Campaigns of Generals Harmer, St. Clair, and Wayne, and other matters connected with the Indian Relations of the United States and Great Britain, from the Peace of 1783 to the Indian Peace of 1795.* By William L. Stone. 2 vols. 8vo. Dearborn: New York. 1838. *Archibald Stevenson*

IT was a matter of surprise to us, at first, to find two ponderous volumes occupied with the life of an Indian chief; but upon perusal, we found that the hero of the history takes up a small space in the body of the work. He is, it is true, a prominent actor in the transactions recorded in these volumes; but if they contained nothing more than the events in which Joseph Brant was personally concerned, they would be of small value compared with that which they intrinsically possess. The fact is, that the American public are indebted to Col. Stone, for an entirely new history of the war of the revolution. This history is not only new as being composed in a lively style, and as containing much graphic description of interesting scenes by an original writer; but by means of new sources of information, and authentic documents, not possessed by any former historian, the author has presented

great exertion to obtain a missionary; and having found a gentleman, as he thought, well qualified for a religious instructor, he applied repeatedly and earnestly to the bishop of Quebec to ordain him, and failing here, he applied to the bishop of New York, who acceded to his wishes. He also entered into correspondence with some distinguished members of the Missionary Society of New York, particularly the Rev. Doctors Mason and Miller; and when this Society sent to the Indians, Mr. Holmes, a pious missionary, he received him kindly. Indeed, his house was always the missionaries' home when in his neighbourhood; where they were hospitably treated when well, and tenderly nursed when sick.

Brant left several children; two of whom were educated at Dartmouth College. He died after a painful illness, Nov. 24, 1807, at his residence near the head of lake Ontario, in the full possession of his faculties, and according to the belief of his attendants, in the full faith of the Christian religion.

Samuel Miller

ART. II.—*Bible Class Manual: or a System of Theology, in the order of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, adapted to Bible Classes.* By John M'Dowell, D.D., Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. Vol. I. 12mo. pp. 382. Philadelphia: William S. Martien. 1838.

It ought to be the great object of every minister of the gospel, and indeed of every one who wishes to promote the spiritual benefit of his fellow men, first of all, and above all, to bring their minds into contact with the word of God. He who does this most simply, diligently, affectionately and perseveringly, takes a course best adapted to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of those whom he addresses. Whether he approaches the young or the old, the rich or the poor, the learned or the illiterate—it is all the same—the Bible—the Bible ought to be his main instrument—and under God, his chief dependence for “preparing the way of the Lord” in the hearts and lives of all whom he wishes to lead in the way of holiness and salvation.

It is gratifying to observe how much more amply and

happily the times in which we live are furnished with helps for the attainment of this object, than were the times of our fathers. We are apt to think the former days better than the present. But in whatever other respects this may be said, it cannot be justly said in reference to aids for the instruction of the rising generation. It would be happy for us all if they were employed with as much diligence and skill as they have been produced.

The appearance of every manual which tends to render the Bible more familiar to the minds of the young, and better understood by them, may be regarded as a public benefit. We have long been persuaded that, unless the minds of children and young people are early imbued with religious knowledge; unless they are made intimately acquainted, in the morning of life, with well composed elementary works in this branch of knowledge, they will be apt to manifest the disadvantage arising from this defect in their youthful training, as long as they live. Even if they afterwards become pious, and ever so diligent in theological study, still the loss of accurate youthful instruction seems, in many cases, never to be really compensated. It is storied of a young candidate for the ministry, recently on trials before an ecclesiastical body, that, being at some loss for an answer when asked—"What is Justification?" a spectator remarked to one seated beside him—"Poor young man! what a pity his mother did not teach him the Catechism!"—Upon the same principle, no doubt, it was that the late Principal Robertson, of the University of Edinburgh, when consulted, as he of course often was, by candidates for the ministry in the Scottish Church, he was in the constant habit of recommending to them, as the first book to be carefully studied, after the Bible, Vincent's explanation of the *Catechism*. And when they expressed surprise, as they sometimes did, that a work so simple and elementary, and so much better adapted to school-boys and children than to theological students, should be recommended to those who were taking their places in a more elevated form; he never failed to inculcate the vitally important lesson, that even a theological student is not prepared to proceed with advantage in his professional studies, until he has read, digested, thoroughly mastered, and fully deposited in his memory, the first principles of gospel truth, as exhibited in well prepared formularies. He was wont to insist, that, without an intimate acquaintance with such formularies, even a man of real talents and learning, will be apt

to be less simple, clear and elementary in his views of truth, and far less ready in exhibiting and applying them to the capacities of the young and the ignorant, as well as of the better instructed, than if he were early made at home in such compositions.

The counsel of this celebrated man does him great honour. None but a vain and superficial thinker ever thought little of well constructed ecclesiastical formularies, and of judicious commentaries, adapted to make them popular and useful. This the venerable Calvin well understood and appreciated, when, immediately after his return to Geneva, after the banishment, disgraceful to the hostile faction only, which had sent him away,—he began to employ himself diligently in Catechisms and other compends intended to instruct all, and especially the rising generation, in the principles of true religion.

We are deeply persuaded that the early and diligent study of the Bible is of more importance in the formation of the intellectual and moral character, than is commonly supposed even by reflecting and serious people. Many imagine that a deficiency in the private study of the scriptures may be supplied by the instruction of the pulpit. But such persons forget that preaching itself is likely to be in a great measure useless without a previous acquaintance with the word of God. Without this, the very language of the sacred writers will appear strange and unintelligible; and the allusions of preachers to the sentiments, the characters, and the examples of the Bible will be in a great measure lost. Pastors and parents, then, can never prepare the youth committed to their care for a profitable attendance on the sanctuary, without unwearied labour to imbue their minds with elementary knowledge, and especially to make them familiar with the contents of the sacred volume. The more we see and hear of the scenes passing before us, the more we are persuaded that, with all our Sabbath schools, and other boasted privileges of the day, a radical deficiency in the religious instruction and training of the youth of the church is one of the great crying sins of our age. We never had so many popular religious books; and, at the same time, so little solid religious reading. Never so many facilities for imbuing the minds of children with elementary knowledge; and, at the same time, so little of that discriminating indoctrination in first principles which is adapted to prepare the rising generation to be intelligent Christians, and “witnesses for the truth,” when

the solemn trust of ecclesiastical responsibility shall be devolved upon them.

The Catechisms of our church have a degree of excellence at once peculiar and pre-eminent. We know of none that can claim the most distant title to a preference. Their richness and density of thought; their clearness and felicity of diction; and their remarkable accuracy and comprehensiveness of instruction, are absolutely without a parallel in the whole catalogue of ecclesiastical formularies. They have been the theme of the admiration and praise of all competent and impartial judges for nearly two hundred years. And yet, though our fathers used and lauded them: and though their beneficial influence has been so strikingly manifested; their use, for the last thirty years, has been in a great measure banished from our churches. They have been either superseded by others of far less value; or they have been suffered to drop out of use, as too sectarian, without the adoption of others, of even tolerable character, to supply their place. Of late, indeed, there has appeared to be some little waking up to the proper estimate and use of these admirable compends of Gospel truth; but we have, as yet, seen nothing to revive the hope, that the good old habits of our Scottish and Puritan fathers, with regard to these formularies, were about to return: habits of thoroughly committing to memory the larger as well as the shorter catechism, and making the recitation of them not merely a quarterly or half yearly task; but the business of every week, and sometimes of every day.

With these views, we greatly rejoice that the highly respected author of the manual before us, has thought proper to employ himself in a work so important, and so well adapted to reward labour as the preparation of the volume under review. Dr. M'Dowell, about ten or eleven years ago, published a system of theology, in the form of sermons, in two volumes, octavo, which were considered as a monument of the author's solid merit, both as a divine and a sermonizer. The substance of the first of these volumes he has here presented in an abridged and improved form; and exhibiting what we hope will prove an acceptable and useful offering, not only to the youth of his own large and important flock, but also to the young people of many other congregations. The work is executed with judgment and with care, and we hope it will soon be completed by the addition of the second volume, which we take for granted the author intends to give.

The author, in a short preface, speaks thus of his work—“It has been revised, and is now offered to the public in the form of a continued treatise, divided into chapters, instead of sermons. In preparing it in this form, the introductions to the several sermons, and the practical observations at the close of them, have generally been omitted. The special object of the author in this edition has been to prepare the work for the use of his own bible class, that the Scriptures may be studied in connexion with our own excellent catechism, and the great doctrines of religion in systematic order. To facilitate this object, he has made out a course of questions on each chapter. The questions on each chapter are preceded by a portion of Scripture as the subject of the bible lesson, in which portion the doctrine of the chapter is the prominent subject. The plan of the author, in his bible class, is to ask general questions, suggested by the portion of Scripture, which is given as the lesson; and then to take up the doctrine of the chapter in the system, and dwell particularly on this. If any pastor should see proper to introduce this work into his bible class, he can, according to his judgment, give any other portion of Scripture, as the foundation of the lesson on any particular doctrine.”

In reading this volume we have been struck with the fact, that the doctrines which it teaches are, strictly, those of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of our Church. The author has not only adopted, as his title page intimates, “the *order* of the Westminster Shorter Catechism;” but he has followed its *spirit* throughout. We hope this will be borne in mind by our readers. There are those, at the present day, claiming to be, pre-eminently, “revival preachers,” who contend, that the “old fashioned doctrines of Calvinism” are unfriendly to revivals of religion, and tend to lull their hearers asleep in supineness and sloth. We have before us a specimen of the habitual preaching of Dr. M’Dowell. We see here how he instructs the old and the young who are committed to his pastoral charge. Perhaps the preaching of no modern pastor is in more strict accordance with what some are fond of calling the “old dead orthodoxy” of the Reformers and our Puritan fathers. And yet the ministry of few pastors in the United States has been more frequently and signally blessed by powerful revivals of religion than his. By the instrumentality of those great truths so often and so profanely derided, have sinners in great numbers been convinced and converted, and believers edified and comforted

under his ministry. These were the doctrines too, unceasingly preached by Whitefield, by the Tennents, and by other men in their day, who were as eminently favoured with revivals of religion as any men who ever trod the American soil. It is altogether too late, then, to tell us, that the preaching of these doctrines tends to lull men asleep in sin, and to destroy the hopes of the lover of revivals. Not only the word of God, but the whole history of the church, contradicts this allegation, and shows it to be a vain dream. Nay, the very reverse of this allegation is the fact. It is notorious, from the annals of the church, in every period of her progress, that the prevalence of Pelagian and Semipelagian opinions, instead of promoting, as their advocates promised, vital piety, and evangelical zeal, has never failed to be ultimately destructive of both; and to beget either fanatical excitement, or lifeless formality, according to the circumstances of each particular case.

Never have the reformed churches been in a better condition since the time of the reformers, than when the doctrines of strict Calvinism universally reigned; when a profession of faithful adherence to Calvinistic formularies was exacted of every pastor and elder; and when the youth of the church were trained with uniformity and fidelity in the same system. Then, in all cases, has the church exhibited the largest share of vital piety; the most enlightened and steady zeal in doing good; the richest fruits of holy living; and the most happy success in training up a seed to serve God, who were "accounted to the Lord as a generation."

Were it possible, therefore, so to lift up our voice as to cause it to be heard by every pastor, by every ruling elder, and by every professing Christian in our beloved church, we would exert it in saying to them, let the children of the church be the objects of your vigilant and unceasing care. Let them be familiar, from their mother's lap, with the Bible, with the Catechisms of the church, and with such judicious compends of Christian doctrine as shall pre-occupy their minds with divine truth, to the exclusion of the countless errors which are ever found to assail their opening faculties. Let the officers of the church, as their moral parent, regard them as, in some respects, the most precious part of their charge; providing for their instruction; suppressing every kind of vice and immorality in them; reminding them of their baptismal dedication; putting in the Master's claim to their affections and services; and

accompanying every effort with unceasing prayer with them, and for them, that the Holy Spirit may accompany and crown with success all the means employed for their benefit.

Such must be among the means unceasingly employed, if we wish our church to be built up in knowledge, in purity and in peace; if we wish harmony and orthodoxy to reign in all our borders; if we desire our children to take the place of their fathers when we are sleeping in the dust, and to bear forward the ark of God to victory and glory in the future contests with error and sin, when we shall have resigned to them our armour. He who expects the church to gain such blessings without the use of such means, may just as well hope to "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Without the faithful use of such means, if the church were to-day perfectly pure and united, we might expect to find her, in a few years, torn by divisions, forsaken of her children, and her best interests given to the winds.

J. W. Alexander & Prop. A. B. 1838

- ART. III.—1. *Elements of Psychology, included in a Critical Examination of Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, with Additional Pieces.* By Victor Cousin, Peer of France, Member of the Royal Council of Public Instruction, Member of the Institute, and Professor of the History of Ancient Philosophy in the Faculty of Literature. Translated from the French, with an Introduction and Notes, by the Rev. C. S. Henry, D.D. Second Edition, prepared for the use of Colleges. New York: Gould and Newman. 1838. pp. 423. 12mo.
2. *Introduction to the History of Philosophy.* By Victor Cousin, Professor of Philosophy of the Faculty of Literature at Paris. Translated from the French, by Henning Gottfried Linberg. Boston. 1832. pp. 458. 8vo.
3. *An Address delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Sunday, 15th July, 1838.* By Ralph Waldo Emerson. Boston. pp. 31. 8vo.

It is we think undeniable, that since the death of Doctor Thomas Brown of Edinburgh, metaphysical research has been at a stand in Great Britain. In the southern part of the island this had been the case for a much longer period, but the sharp and sceptical enterprise of the Scotch kept

part reviewing Cousin belongs to Prof. Dod