

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

NUMBER II.

SEPTEMBER, 1848.

ARTICLE I.

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY—ITS NATURE AND EVIDENCE.

1. *What Constitutes a Call to the Gospel Ministry, in the Biblical Repertory, for 1831: p. 196.*
2. *The Necessity of a Divine Call. Ch. II. of the Christian Ministry, by the Rev. CHAS. BRIDGES. Fourth Edition. London, 1835.*
3. *Necessary Call to the Ministry. Ch. III. of the Christian Ministry, by J. EDMONSTON, a Wesleyan Minister. London, 1828.*
4. *On the Call of a Minister of Jesus Christ to the Sacred Office. Ch. IV. of EADE'S Gospel Ministry.*
5. *What is a Call to the Ministry? Tracts of the American Tract Society. Vol. 9, p. 333, and vol. 10, p. 285.*
6. *The Use of Preachers, and How to Obtain More, by the Rev. A. A. PORTER. Charleston, 1848.*
7. *A Call to the Ministry—What are the Evidences of a Divine Call? in the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate, 1841.*

VOL. II.—No. 2.

1

foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. (1 Cor. 1: 25.)

POLEMIC THEOLOGY.

1. JOH. FRID. STAFFERI, V. D. M., *Helv. Bern. Institutiones Theologicae Polemicae Universae ordine Scientifico dispositae.*
2. *Lectures in Divinity, by the late* GEORGE HILL, D. D., *Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews. Edited from his Manuscript, by his Son, the Rev. ALEXANDER HILL, Minister of Dailly.*

The former of these works has been before the public for more than a century; the latter for only twenty-seven years. These two authors were comparatively little known, until by these writings they attracted attention, which, in the case of the Scot, was after his death. The Swiss had felt all the influence of the old systems of belief, and was greatly devoted to the Wolfian mode of philosophising. The modes of thought and argument of preceding ages, had left on the minds of his cotemporaries an influence which it would have been marvellous if he had not felt. The terms of the schoolmen are found in his work, though not to the extent that some might expect. He is remarkably clear and logical on most subjects. We can easily pardon the occasional introduction of "casus purus" and like terms, on account of other great excellencies. His work has never been translated into English, nor is it very important that

it should be. Its Latinity is indeed not highly classical nor elegant. It would not compare in general with that of Milton or Calvin. But it is far from being the low and uncouth style of some, whose attainments were otherwise respectable. The chief difficulty that any one would find in reading him is overcome by reading thirty pages, and learning his rather peculiar use of some of the particles. He too often turns Greek words into Latin; yet, at times he is even elegant, and almost always clear. He was familiar with the best writers of his day, and his quotations are pertinent, judicious and striking, though not at all numerous. We commend the study of his work to all who love logical acumen and solemn, reverent discussion of great truths. The work of Principal Hill is of course in English, in a good style, free from meretricious ornament, with a rich vein of originality running through it, and conducted with a degree of candor hardly equalled, and perhaps not surpassed by any for the last century. Indeed, at times, the friend of truth almost trembles for orthodoxy, while he sees presented in their full force the strong points of the impugners of a sound theology. But, when he has read all, then he rejoices that his author was so fair and so full. We ourselves once read some twenty pages, and had occasion to lay the book aside for a few weeks, and the impression left was one of fear that he had yielded too much to his opponents; but when we had time to complete the chapter, we were rather better pleased with it than we had been with any of the preceding.

We, therefore, confidently recommend both of these works to our readers, and especially to our clerical readers, not only as containing a large amount of able discussion, but as models of controversy, worthy, almost without exception, to be followed — Stapfer's mode of philosophising always excepted. The subject of Polemic Theology is one not only of great intrinsic importance, but to the American theologian it has peculiar interest. In our country, who will may preach, and what he will, who will may publish, and what he will, who will and can may found a sect in religion. This results from the perfect freedom of thought and speech and printing in our country. To one who has grown up in this state of things, this freedom presents no strong or peculiar temptations; but to per-

sons whose birth or parentage was foreign, and who have felt the galling oppressions of the old world, such freedom is often bewildering and intoxicating. Accordingly the impulse given to their minds is very powerful, and they vend amongst us all manner of crude opinions and dangerous doctrines. Some of these dealers in bad doctrines are no doubt designing men, and some of them are very shrewd. A few of them have considerable learning. The number of this latter class will probably increase. It is manifest, therefore, that many a hard battle for the truth must here be fought. It is not worth while to groan over heresy and fanaticism, and do nothing to arrest them. It is not worth while to quarrel with our age and country. It is far better to take them as we find them, and deal with them according to our ability and their peculiarities. But how shall this most effectually be done? is a question of high practical interest. In reply, many things might be said; but we shall confine ourselves chiefly to one subject, viz: the true and proper rules of controversy. These are always substantially the same. They are applicable to all times, and nations, and subjects. They are clearly laid down by Stapfer in the second chapter of his first volume, which treats of the CAUTIONS TO BE OBSERVED IN CONTROVERSIES ON THEOLOGY.

In a system of polemic theology, says he, there is need of the rules of prudence. And it is not possible to proceed with too much care in a matter which so closely respects the divine glory, the defence of saving truth, the eternal salvation of man and the destruction of error. Therefore, in this science all things are to be so set in order, that nothing may be omitted, which tends to the attainment of the ends proposed, which are *first*, the demonstration of saving truth, and *then* the conviction of the erring. On the other hand all those things are to be avoided which can hinder the attainment of this end. Therefore, only the best means are to be used. In this consists real prudence. The rules of prudence to be used relate either to him who engages in a discussion, or to the manner of conducting it. Certainly it is the part of a wise man above all things to propose to himself the best end. But in religious controversy, there can be no other lawful aim than the love of the truth itself, that thus the truth may be shown, error refu-

ted, and the erring convinced. For all that we have said tends to the truth, that the purity of God's word, which is truth itself, may surely be preserved and vindicated. The *first* rule is this :

Let him who would engage in controversy, thoroughly examine himself, and see to what end and with what desire he seeks it, whether from ambition, or from a lust of condemning others, or from other depraved passions.

For if a sincere love towards the truth governs the minds of all those who are employed in sacred things, very soon a great part of the controversy falls of itself, and quiet, so much to be desired in the church, is restored. But, if learning is preferred to piety, and out of religion comes craft, only strife and discord can follow. But no one can convince another of the truth, who, being imbued with false opinions, has no firm persuasion of the truth. For he who would prove anything, must have clear convictions concerning it, and those based upon proper evidence. But if he doubts of the truth of a matter, it is because the proof is not sufficiently clear to himself; and consequently he cannot have hope of his adversary or of himself that by the evidence of the truth he may be rendered certain, or, which is one and the same thing, be convinced. Therefore, the *second* rule of prudence is this :

Let no one engage in a controversy with others concerning the articles of religion, unless he, having laid aside preconceived opinions, and being convinced of the truth by proper proof, has acquired clear and settled views of it.

It is certainly the part of prudence to avoid all those things, which in the use of means may be a hindrance to the attainment of this end. Therefore, he who engages in controversy, should in regard to himself avoid all those things which can hinder his design. This rule respects both his mind and his will and affections. It is true that the human mind, by reason of its great weakness and corruption, is so very much imbued with false opinions and prejudices, and is by these so much biassed, that it errs from the truth, and very often in lieu of it defends error. For the prejudices which spring from sloth, or a bad education, or rashness, or authority, do so prevail with many, that very often they who count themselves learned, assent to the truth for no other cause than that human authority adds

weight to it in their minds. For whoever draws not the truth from its own fountains, and does not take pains in acquiring certainty, is led only by the prejudices of authority, and so holds any proposition as true, either because he has heard it from some man of great name, or because it is extant in the writings of a distinguished man, or because he reads it in creeds and confessions. Nor can superstition arise but from a blind assent. Nor can he who is borne away only by such blind assent, clearly see the connection and binding force of truth, or in what manner it flows from his principles; and, therefore, he cannot convince another by a demonstration of the truth. Nor has he seen the value of the truth to be defended, unless he has clearly seen its connection with foundation truths. Whence oftentimes a controversy of no moment springs up, or it degenerates into a mere war of words. As the end of polemic theology is the preservation of the truth pure, all those things are to be laid aside, which injure the truth. Whence arises the *third* rule:

As the affections of a depraved will, especially ambition, the hatred, which has by some been thought peculiar to Controversial Theologians, [odium Theologicum,] and the love of sect, do so greatly injure the truth, they must be laid aside before we engage in discussions concerning religion.

From the will, depraved affections, such as ambition, the hatred of theologians,* and excessive love of sect, do very greatly injure the truth. For he who is swollen with ambition, does not seek truth, but praises. Hence, those unhappy strifes concerning religion, where neither yields to the other, lest he should seem formally to have erred. Hence, we see so many logomachies and strifes of words; hence, the seeds of new controversies; hence, the love of contradiction, and pertinacity in defending error; hence, nothing is esteemed in respect of truth, except as thereby a name is sought to be gained. So that some who are strangers to the love of truth, are impelled by a desire of contention, which springs from the hatred of theologians, with which, if a man be imbued, he cannot tolerate those who disagree with him, but whatever they say seems to him suspicious,

* *Odium Theologicum.*

and by exaggerating their errors, heresy is fabricated out of any thing, although it does not overthrow the foundation of faith. Hence, new disputes arise. How greatly such conduct makes against the truth can hardly be told. In this way, the minds of men are soured rather than convinced. Besides, the greatest part of men are so imbued with the love of the religion in which they are born, that they defend opinions early received, although they themselves never clearly saw their truth. Therefore, in matters of faith they yield more to human than to divine authority. From this source arise a certain blind zeal and a love of sect, so that we condemn those who have not the same ideas with us concerning the points in controversy.

But truth is rather to be sought as if we had not yet found it. So our discussions should be conducted, as if we were not much bound to any sect. These are the chief rules or cautions which respect him who would engage in controversy. But in the controversy itself, or in the mode of conducting it, the necessity of the rules of prudence is equally great, lest we wander from the end proposed. These two things are to be sought in a discussion, viz: the establishment of truth and the refutation of error; hence, both are to be so conducted that the conviction of the erring and the defence of the truth, the true end of polemic theology, may be attained. To this end, it is above all things requisite that we use no fallible principles. Hence arises this *fourth* rule:

In Polemic Theology, truths are to be established, so that they may become certain. Hence, nothing is to be trusted to authority, our own, or that of another, because that is a fallible principle.

Because proof ought to rest upon certain principles, it is necessary that there should be such principles either of reason or of revelation, or that there should be on the earth some infallible man, whose authority, that cannot be deceived, may decide concerning any articles of faith, even without argument or proof. But, laying aside the testimony of Scripture, and taking experience only as the test, there never was such a man,—a man, who was himself the truth, or the embodiment of truth, and incapable of deceiving or of being deceived. Hence, in religion, nothing is to be granted to human authority, our own, or that of another, if

it be unaccompanied with proof. But we must always recur to the principles of reason and revelation only, both of which acknowledge God as their author, and there we may safely plant our feet. Hence, that the truth may be established, another rule is to be observed, which is the *fifth*, viz :

If one would make the truth clear to another, such an order is to be observed in delivering it, as that conviction may follow, unless the adversary purposely closes his eyes.

For when we would convince another by presenting the proper evidence of truth, it is right that an order in the proof be observed, so that certain rules being first laid down, other things by a fair process of reasoning may be drawn from them. Thus rules or principles being always first given, their consequences may be understood and proven. Hence, in a treatise concerning the dogmas of faith, such an order is to be used, lest the work fall into a confused method, and lest the truth be built upon premises concerning which our opponents are still in doubt. Nothing, more than this course of proceeding, hinders conviction. Therefore, in teaching the articles of belief, such a connection is to be observed, that one may always rest upon another, and the latter always receive light from the former. For if those things which are chiefly fundamental in religion are taken for granted, and the rest built upon them, all things flowing from them cannot but be doubtful to a stranger to the truth. But the foundation being rightly laid, the structure of the whole edifice will be most firm. To him who errs concerning the foundation of the Christian religion, all dogmas of faith are uncertain, unless the truth both of natural and revealed religion, and the great foundation of the religion of a sinner, viz., that Christ is the only and the most perfect way of salvation, be first demonstrated. But on these truths as foundations all the rest may be built. Therefore, those things on which the certainty of all other articles depends ought not to be noticed merely in a passing way, lest all things which follow from them become uncertain also. In an argument which has in view the conviction of another, it is fit that the evidence be distinctly given. Hence arises the *sixth* rule :

In Polemic Theology all obscurity is to be avoided, so that by proper proof your opponent may become certain concerning the proposition to be proved.

VOL. II. — No. 2.

5

The reason why a man assents to the truth is, that he sees the force of the evidence, or that it is clear to him ; but as long as he does not clearly perceive the force and connection of the reasoning, he cannot be brought to assent, and without this clearness there can at best be but a blind assent. Therefore, in reasoning all obscurity is to be avoided, and as far as possible, simplicity is to be studied, lest any doubt should remain. It tends to this end, first, that the simplest language be used, and no place be given to vague terms. Obscure words deceive rather than persuade, and are suited only to sow strife, and produce a war of words, and thus do much injury to the truth, especially when under them lie concealed several senses. In the next place, the connection is to be maintained in drawing out truths, so that others may clearly see that the predicate agrees with the subject ; for on this rests the evidence of the argument. If this be wanting, certainty concerning the matter in hand must be wanting also. These are the principal rules which must be observed in arguing for the truth, if we would attain the end proposed. In refuting error, all these means are to be no less used, for they conduce to the right end ; and in like manner all those things are to be avoided which could hinder the proper effect of truth. But above all, unless we would lose sight of our design, the state of the controversy, or the errors to be refuted must be well understood, and that in the manner before stated. Hence, the *seventh* rule to be observed is this :

In refuting errors, the whole system of a sect must be well understood in its connection, so that the state of the controversy may thereby be rightly given.

Doubtless, each sect has its own peculiar prejudices and hypotheses, to which it is much inclined. But among these hypotheses are certain primary prejudices, which serve as a foundation to the rest. But the whole system of errors must be considered, that we may know in what way one error is connected with another, and how each of the remaining errors contributes its part to the establishment of the primary hypothesis. For in this way only can the mind of the erring be well understood, and the foundation being destroyed, the whole edifice falls of itself. Therefore, in treating controversies, they act amiss who separately unfold and confute single errors standing by themselves, and

have no respect to the whole system and mutual relation which they have to each other. For very many errors cannot be thoroughly understood, except by their connection with others. And when the errors of others are to be confuted, and the erring convinced of the truth, it is required that the system of error itself be thoroughly understood by him who undertakes the task. Hence arises this *eighth* rule :

No one can refute the errors of another and establish the truth in his mind, unless he knows those things on which the truth rests, and so knows the whole system of truth.

For as it is a matter of much importance that the mind of an opposer be clearly understood, so it is not less needful that the truth in all its connection be known, before we attempt to confute any one, and in the way which we have previously pointed out. And *first*, the divine oracles themselves, the fountain of all saving truth, are to be diligently read and studied. In these and from these is wisdom. If we thus act, all murmurings to the contrary, all sciences of a false name, all objections, all the sophisms of factious men will be easily scattered. And for that cause, truths are to be so learned that we may know in what way any one truth agrees with the truth on which it rests, and so that we may know in all its connection saving truth, and in what way it flows from its own first principles. And *secondly*, there are also some to be refuted in argument, who deny any revelation, and cannot be vanquished otherwise than on the principles of philosophy. Therefore, the knowledge of that also is of the greatest use in polemic theology. For it greatly aids the mind of man in the investigation of truth; it teaches men to form clear and distinct notions; it accustoms the mind to caution in deciding. A knowledge of it also aids the mind both in the right perception of truth, and also in the more ready detection and consequent overthrow of error. These general uses of philosophy are to be the more sought for by the theologian, as he is the more bound to beware of errors, and as he labors to acquire undoubted certainty. But philosophy also teaches those truths, which revealed theology presupposes to have been proven; such as the existence of God, his attributes, especially his righteousness, which is the

foundation of all religion, his providence and government of all things, the nature and liberty of the soul, although subject to the divine control, the immortality of the soul and other points. It is so much the more incumbent on the theologian to make himself thoroughly acquainted with philosophy, as errors may the more effectually be confuted by things learned from nature. It is also not a little helpful in attaining a clear knowledge of saving truth, if also the systems of the ablest theologians, and also the books of creeds be read. Polemic theology is not concerned about all errors. Hence, we form this *ninth* rule :

In the selection of errors, there is need of the greatest prudence, lest we either attempt to refute those which are of no moment, or, falling into the other extreme, spare those which most of all injure saving truth, or, finally, lest we hold for error those things which are a part of the very same truth.

For there are various kinds of error, some of which lie buried as it were with the ashes of their authors, and others of them are of no moment. Besides, many things appear to be errors, which are not truly so, but rather are a part of the truth. Hence, both in view of the authors and of their sentiments, a selection must be made; nor are errors to be, as it were, raked together from all quarters, although they may at some time have been set forth; but it is better sometimes to refuse to know them than to recall them from their grave. We might here give examples, which prove that errors are often only the more widely spread, and received by a multitude of men, in consequence of an attempt to meet them in a serious way. Hence, also, in refuting any error of recent origin, care must be taken lest in that way we give a handle to its further dissemination. For human nature is such, that as soon as the reading of any bad book is prohibited, or the supreme magistrate forbids the bookseller to vend it, or any one makes a serious attack upon it, some persons will desire to read it, whether they understand it or not, whether they were previously established in the truth or not. In this way the ignorant are easily led astray. It would, therefore, in my judgment, be best if the reading of such a book were not forbidden, lest the common people should by that means become the more desirous of procuring and reading it. This can hardly be prevented after all

the efforts made. But it would be best, if forthwith learned and pious men would prepare an edition furnished with notes, completely overthrowing the errors contained in the book, so that the reader might have before his eyes the truth opposed to the error, and thus become enlightened on the subject. Sometimes we must spare those prejudices which are no great damage to the Christian church, lest in refuting them we neglect more important errors, or in confuting them we give a handle to greater errors. But this is not to be so understood, that if we undertake to refute the entire system of any sect, any thing in it is to be omitted, lest we should seem only to attack those things which appear to be the most easily refuted. This would argue a bad cause or want of skill. But in a system of errors, those are to be specially attacked, which constitute the primary hypotheses of the sect, affect the very foundations of faith, threaten the greatest loss to the cause of truth, are most agreeable to carnal wisdom, and exclude men from spiritual life and salvation. These must be met, and torn up by the roots. But, as on the one part the moderation becoming a theologian should be manifested, so on the other hand the articles of religion are not to be pared down to suit the carnal mind, lest in seeking to avoid Charybdis we fall upon Scylla, and make ourselves guilty of religious indifferentism, or at least of latitudinarianism, and in this way extend a friendly hand to all forms of religion. We must also take heed, lest we hold that for error, which is perhaps a part of the truth. This may be done, especially in those articles which exceed the human understanding, and on the one part are so very high that the sight of the eyes of the mind cannot reach so far, and which on the other part are so very broad, that the capacity of our feeble intellects cannot comprehend them all. And how this may be the case in the high points of truth, such as, for example, the divine decrees and predestination, any one may easily understand. Of other matters of the same class, we say nothing at present. When we desire to convince others, the rule to be observed is this *tenth* :

If we wish not only to vanquish but to convince the erring, we must so deport ourselves towards them, that they shall see that we are actuated by no bad passion, no love of sect, but solely by the love of truth.

Because, in Polemic Theology, we not only seek that divine truth may be preserved pure, but also that others may be convinced, therefore all those things are to be shunned, which can hinder the conviction of another. Above all things, therefore, care must be taken, lest the opponent conceive an evil suspicion concerning him who conducts the discussion on the side of truth, as if he were so steeped in prejudices, that laying aside all reason he wishes to play the judge or arbiter, and alone decide every thing by his own authority. But in a disputation with others, we ought rather so to behave, as to ascribe nothing to our own opinions and judgments, and so as to shew that we lay aside the authority of even the greatest theologians, yea, of the church itself, because fallible, and that we manifestly grant nothing to the love of sect, lest we appear to wish to prescribe laws to the mind or conscience of another. Something also is to be yielded to the reasons of an opponent; nor are they to be instantly contemned, but rather weighed, and difficulties are to be examined. For so soon as we speak with contempt of the arguments which another offers, we appear either to condemn his mental endowments, or at least we seem to be strongly prejudiced against his views, or we seem reluctant to give just place to the examination of his arguments. Hence, a discussion should be conducted as if we had previously no blind attachment to any form of religion, and were entirely free from all love of party. For it often contributes much to conciliate an opponent, if, where it can be done with a good conscience, we even for a little while seem to him to doubt to which opinion the preference is to be given. Therefore, Minutius Felix, in Octavius, section 5, says: Although it is proper that your mind be so enlightened that you may hold the balance of a perfectly just judge, yet you must not lean strongly to the other side, lest it should appear that the decision did not spring from the discussion, as well as from your own views. From what has been said arises this rule, which is the *eleventh* :

In polemic theology, the conviction of the erring is to be sought, and conviction can be had only by strong proof.

Therefore, if we would convince another, we must not rage and be violent towards him, but must seek a conquest by arguments alone.

If in polemic theology, the real object be the establish-

ment of the truth, so as to bind the conscience of another in favor of the ground we maintain, then all external force must be kept at a distance. For that cannot be done by coercion, which from its nature ought to be done in the exercise of the highest liberty of mind, that is, that one should by degrees lay aside his former ideas concerning great matters of faith, and clearly embrace others. For the intellect cannot be influenced by force, so as thenceforth to hold as false the things which it has hitherto believed, and to receive as true those things which it has formerly regarded as false. And as no man can have dominion over the thoughts of another, so neither can the mind of another be brought to agree with us, except it be led by solid reasons. Or, if a man should be influenced by threats and coercion to profess with his mouth the same faith with us, it would not be faith, but mere hypocrisy. Neither can any other than a voluntary profession be pleasing to God, inasmuch as every where in his word he demands a voluntary worship. Therefore, although a man may by force, by the sword, by exile, or by other punishments, be brought to say the same thing as we do, yet he cannot be forced to believe as we do. But if, as every one may easily grant, not only the external profession of the lips, but the conviction and assent of the heart constitute religion, then it follows also that a man cannot be coerced to embrace another religion. And if to the professors of one religion, there should be granted any right to persecute those who are attached to another religion, war would continually rage every where in the earth, which is now cut up into so many sects and parties. And in this way we should be employed, not in vanquishing errors, but errorists. And that the mind of the erring may be rightly understood, he that would confute a proposition ought to treat it according to the views entertained of it by him who affirms it. Whence this *twelfth* rule is formed :

Nothing is to be invented or feigned concerning errorists, and we are to charge upon them only what they hold ; and we must abstain from urging those dangerous consequences, which are not formed for the purpose of convincing, but of annoying or injuring an opponent.

For in this science, we must chiefly labor for the promotion of the love of truth, and the conviction of the erring.

Therefore, on the one hand, we must proceed with candor and sincerity, and on the other hand, not use means which might hinder conviction, such as exciting an opponent to anger or rousing his passions. For, if we frame false consequences from the words of an opponent, we do not so much manifest a spirit eager for the truth, as a desire of impairing the esteem in which he is held. But we act fairly with an opponent, when we truly state the meaning of his words, and do not, by falsely ascribing to him any thing, pervert his words to a worse sense than they naturally bear. But we do not deal candidly, if in ignorance of his opinions in their connection, we allege something detached and out of the connection. This may be done, if we have not thoroughly read all the books of our opponents, but judge of the whole by a part, or, if we bend our minds more to words than to a liberal interpretation of them, or if we press the mere propriety of the language used by opponents. Those who leave untouched the foundations of errors, and, slighting the love of truth, draw from the doctrine of an opponent consequences by which they endeavor to bring into doubt his good name, or draw consequences which are not consistent with his views, or which he rejects, denying that they flow from his received opinions, are called inference makers. [Consequentiarii.] Such make at will the first inference, and from this they draw many others, and study to affix to the words of an opponent many dangerous doctrines full of poison. But all consequences are not to be rejected, if in drawing them the proper rules be observed. The chief rules to be observed are, that consequences be not formed from the naked words, but from their true sense, neither may we garble them, but must take them in their connection. For, in the words of another, "in condemning a book, we are not to pretend a scruple about one or two phrases, but the train of remark is to be considered; for it is never possible to say all things at once; and there are some things, which, taken separately, can be opposed; but when all are justly examined, those which at first seemed fit only to be rejected, are for the most part made good and fortified by the design of the context, or the scope of the whole." "And heresy is in the sense, not in the writing; and the sense, not the language, is the fault." It is necessary, that a consequence, to be fair, must flow not

by long windings, but immediately from the doctrine of an opponent, so that it can be so plainly drawn from his principles, that he may be fairly held to renounce his principles or admit the conclusion. A consequence which flows from the admitted principles of an opponent, is not on that account to be imputed to him, inasmuch as he may perhaps not have considered it. Doubtless, we should also distinguish between those who possess acuteness of judgment and enjoy the faculty of clearly seeing the bearings of things, and those who possess in a less degree a philosophical cast of mind. In other words, we must distinguish between teachers and hearers, the taught and the untaught. For to this latter class consequences, even if they clearly flow from their doctrine, cannot be forthwith charged. But manifestly we may not urge those consequences, which are only formed to annoy an opponent, and expose him to the laugh. That we may convince and so win an errorist, we must carefully abstain from all those things which rouse his passions and excite him to wrath. This may be done by using that kind of arguments, by which we seek to render an opponent and his doctrine hateful to others. Such reasons are called arguments drawn from malice [ab invidia.] Therefore, the *thirteenth* rule to be observed is this:

In Polemical Theology, we must abstain from arguments drawn from malice, because thus the minds of men are not conciliated, but confirmed in error.

Such arguments are used, when any one anxious to destroy the fame or fortune of another, first, spitefully rails at, and maliciously states the opinion of the man whom he would refute. And so it comes to pass, that oftentimes something is held as error, which is not so in fact, and in this way many a time the greatest injury is done to innocent men. This conduct, because it is utterly opposed to the rules of Christian love, and of sacred Scripture, and to the promotion of reason, and, in the end, of truth, of the divine honor, and of the conviction of our neighbor, is to be specially avoided. Again, an argument is drawn from malice, when the received opinions of an opponent are compared with the opinions of those men who have had a black mark put upon them, or are strongly disliked. This is done, when, for example, all heresies, long since obsolete,

are charged upon the erring; or they, though innocent, are accused of holding them. Thus, Protestants are by Papists compared to Simonians, Novatians, Sabellians, Manichees, Donatists, Arians, Pelagians, and others. Thus, to say nothing of other examples, Bellarmine [Tom. 2, Controvers. Lib. 4, de ecclesia, ch. 9,] very often attempts to fasten on the Reformed the crime of Manicheism. As it rarely happens that any one of the moderns adopts the entire system of any ancient sect, it would be foolish, for any single opinion which he held in common with any ancient heretic, to fasten upon him the whole heresy. But, if at any time there be a right design and good reason, such comparison may be made, both for the purpose of exposing the new doctrines of any heresy, and of fore-arming others against them. Thus Peter, in his second epistle, 2: 15, compares those against whom he discourses with Balaam. John also does the same thing in Revelation 2: 14. Thus, very properly the doctrine of certain moderns is by our theologians compared with the opinions of the ancient Pelagians. Here, also, let it be stated that we must avoid all that hatred which has sometimes been thought peculiar to polemics in theology, and is therefore called the *Odium Theologicum*. The argument may be said to be drawn from malice in another way, as when the value of the matter in controversy is much exaggerated, and when those who do not err fundamentally are pronounced heretics and the thunder of the anathema is hurled against them. Or it is done, if the doctrine of an opponent is defamed by spiteful names. Thus the opinion of the Reformed concerning predestination, is marked among some as Stoical Fate, the mother of security, and other terms of reproach. Or it is done, if the arguments of an opponent are manifestly concealed, or at least not stated in their full force. Or it is done, if in a controversy not of the greatest value, we keep silence concerning the points which make for the opinion of an opponent, and spend our whole time on those points by which it is particularly disparaged. As the conviction of the erring is to be sought, and as to that end no external force is to be employed, the *fourteenth* rule to be observed is that:

Not the persons of errorists, but only their errors are to be attacked.

For that we may spare the erring and destroy their errors, is the very design of polemic theology, and the very duties of humanity would urge us to do as much. Wherefore, Augustine thus writes in his fourth book against the Donatists: "Love the men, slay their errors; contend for the truth without bitterness; pray for those whom you confute and vanquish." Nor can the example of Christ and the Apostles be pleaded to the contrary. It is true that Christ did sometimes use severe expostulations concerning the persons of the Pharisees and Sadducees, calling them an evil and adulterous generation, (Matt. 16: 4,) and saying that they were begotten of their father the devil, (John 8: 44.) John also said that they were a generation of vipers. (Matt. 3: 7.) In the same manner also Paul treated Elymas, (Acts 13: 10,) calling him the child of the devil. These cases cannot be a guide to us. For, as the example of Christ and the Apostles are proposed to us for imitation, so there are cases in which it is not lawful for us to imitate them, seeing that Christ was free from immoderate zeal, and moreover possessed absolute and supreme power, omniscience and infallibility, with which infallibility and also with the Apostolic scourge, he endowed the Apostles. Therefore it become Him and the Apostles to do things against their adversaries, which it is not competent to any mortal again to do. Moreover, the manner of the fathers in dealing with heretics is not to be justified. They often treated them too severely. Nor is their conduct an authoritative rule to us, nor is their zeal, when excessive, to be praised. That great theologian, Hermann Witsius, in his treatise concerning a modest theologian, says of this matter: "Never have I been able to bring my mind to praise without exception that excessive vehemence either of ancient or more modern theologians, with which they have often taken up their adversaries, scarcely describing them otherwise than as that race of dogs, hogs, paltry fellows, [nebulonum,] and by other brief sayings, and rushing upon them with the storm and hail of impetuous speech. This was done by the Athanasiuses, Nazianzens, Basils, Jeromes, and others, who openly traduced and held up to infamy the gainsayers of their doctrine, by stinging speeches and biting sarcasms. I cannot, without discrimination, praise these men, although otherwise abounding in virtues, and at times to be rever-

enced for their amazing majesty. Those great men in the days of our fathers, heroes of immortal memory, whose labors it pleased God to employ to drive away the grossest darkness of ignorance and superstition, fell into the same error. I prefer to impute this severity of language to the vice of the age, and to the disposition of these men. (For although they were holy men, they were still men.) I also take delight in paying tribute to their other and very great virtues. But I cannot free them from all blame by referring to the example of Christ and his Apostles; nor can I commend their conduct in this respect to the imitation of others. The *fifteenth* rule then is:

That a satirical mode of writing is not to be used, and all reproaches and stinging scoffs, by which we vex an adversary, must be eschewed.

For when we endeavor to convince another, his passions are not to be roused, nor is he to be provoked either to anger or grief. But it never comes to pass that by a sarcastic mode of speaking, one with whom we have a discussion, changes his opinion, but rather is excited to anger and vindictive desires. Therefore, if we desire to convince another, all scoffs and stinging witticisms must be shunned. Doubtless, this satirical mode of writing which we use, has its origin in a malignant contempt of our opponent. By it we study to expose him to the laugh of others, and to render him contemptible, which as it sours him and is an evil in itself, ought to be far from theological writings. Neither will those who love weight of argument and truth rather than this fallacious method, be easily brought to assent to the positions we take by such a style. Nor did Christ, nor his Apostles, use this means of refuting error; for the grave nature of the matters which we discuss demands that they be handled gravely and managed with reverence and seriousness. Salvianus, in his book concerning providence, says: "So great, so tremendous is the reverence due to the Sacred Majesty, that we ought not only to tremble at those things which are spoken by the impious against religion; but we ought also to introduce those things which we say in favor of religion with a solemn fear and in a grave way. Nor does it agree with the principles of either theology or philosophy, that he should be vexed, who is worthy of either indignation or of pity. Nor are the ex-

amples of the fathers to be imitated, who sometimes resorting to this style, and now and then borne away with the odium theologicum, often gave themselves more to passion than to truth. Although many jesters have existed and will exist, who by a ludicrous manner of speaking, their understandings being deficient, expose the most solemn mysteries of our sacred religion to the laugh, yet their example in conducting a discussion is not to be followed by those, who being taught better things, have learned that sacred matters are to be treated in a holy manner. Seeing that very often men, especially young men, are led away by this satirical mode of attacking religion, it is proper to show how ridiculous are those things which are brought out by such mountebanks; and that nothing in the world is so true, so sacred, and so venerable, that it may not be made a jest of, and exposed to the laugh, and that what is so common is no new thing, but formerly to the Gentiles, led away by carnal wisdom, all the mysteries of religion and the cross of Christ, seemed to be foolishness and worth of a laugh. The Apostle Paul himself, very familiar with heathen writers, says as much. 1 Cor. 1: 2-3. Thus Boelius speaks concerning this mode of attacking religion. "The imprudence of those who would turn religion into ridicule ought to be repressed. The jeers of the scoffer often effect more than the serious refutations of the good. Young persons permit themselves to be more influenced than they are aware of by those who are mere railers against religion. See Diction. Histor. and Critique Tom. 1, fol. 602, in articulo de Bione,

The last rule is:

We must not use that preposterous mode of convincing and refuting infidels, which, to the great injury of the Christian religion, gives up the things which constitute the very essence of the Christian Religion.

I have in my mind that mode of converting unbelievers, by which, in courtesy to them, all mysteries and whatever is beyond the intellect of man and the religion of nature, are given up. But we have not yet reached in our work on polemic theology, the principles by which it can be shown that this method of proceeding cannot obtain. In due time, this shall be done on sound principles, and it shall be shown that mysteries are absolutely necessary in the

religion of a sinner. At present, we only warn the reader against it, as opening the way and giving a handle to theological Pyrrhonism, or universal scepticism, by which any point of the Christian religion may be called in question, nay, the very truth of it be overthrown. This method is adopted among others, by an anonymous writer in the French language. [See *Lettres sur la Religione Essentielle, &c.*] The amount of what he says is, that in treating religion, something is to be conceded to unbelievers and accommodated to their genius; that if we desire our labors to be effective, we must lay aside the dogmas of faith, and urge only the precepts of the Gospel. Then they will confess that the Gospel contains doctrine, good and just, and even of divine origin. He afterwards urges in forty letters, and with much zeal, that in attempting to convert infidels, we insist only on the precepts and moral counsels of Scripture, but that we remain silent concerning those dogmas which are called mysteries, as things at least obscure, not necessary to be known, and indeed not being based upon any obvious or solid reason. But he thinks that most of all in Christianity, we are to see to it that it consist in the simplest truths, by which he understands the moral precepts of religion, and that these alone constitute the essence of religion. He thinks that if this were done, there would not arise so many contentions concerning religion, nor so many distinctions, nor so many inventors of heresy. In answer to such statements, the reader is referred to the able work of J. J. Zimmerman, who has shown how preposterous are such methods, and to Pfaffius on Prejudices.

We may say, in addition to our author's words, that such a course is the surrender of all that is distinctive or valuable to us as sinners in the Christian system.

It seems to us that piety, truth, righteousness, and good manners, require no more than a strict adherence to the foregoing rules. Of course, we can suggest no improvements upon them. That they may be generally and even closely adhered to, is proven by their author, as well as by Principal Hill. In the translation which we have given of them, we have sometimes followed very closely the Latin idiom of the author, because we wished to convey his precise idea. At other times, we have used more freedom, and given only the spirit of his paragraphs.

In conclusion, we express the fervent hope that defenders of the truth, as it is in Jesus, able men, who can rule their own spirits, who can understand the foundations both of truth and error, and who can maintain the truth against all assailants, may be raised up in large numbers in our country. They will be needed more and more. We are, therefore, not in the least inclined to favor those notions which inculcate non-resistance to errorists; while, at the same time, we abhor theological pugilism. Those men in our country, who have by oral debate or by printed publications, met the fautors of heresy, in lucid, kind, solemn, and able discussion, deserve well of their generation. We trust the number of such will be greatly increased. Only let them follow good ends by good rules, and in a good spirit, and they will do a work for which generations to come will bless them.

ARTICLE III.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS CONCERNING A GOD.

I. CHARNOCK *on the Attributes.*

II. PALEY'S *Natural Theology.*

III. LORD BROUGHAM'S *Discourse on Natural Theology.*

IV. LOCKE *on the Human Understanding.*

These volumes are introduced, not for the purpose of review, but as associated with the subject about to be discussed. Charnock on the Divine Existence and Attributes, has long been a text book for theological students and professors. It is learned, able and conclusive. Paley is not much less studied. His argument is simple, logical and