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A
SERIES OF DISCOURSES,
ON THE
CHRISTIAN REVELATION,
Viewed in connexion with the Modern Astronomy,

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THE Author of this work, as we have been informed by an intelligent American traveller, was, for some time, Minister of the Parish of Kilmaney, in Scotland; and, as is too often the case under an establishment, had sought the sacred office rather as a *trade* by which to make a living, than with a view to the glory of God, and the salvation of men. He was, however, known to be a man of talents; and when Dr. Brewster undertook the Editorship of the New Edinburgh Encyclopedia, Dr. Chalmers was requested to write the article CHRISTIANITY. In prosecuting the studies necessary for this occasion, he acquired new views of the religion of the gospel. With a candour and magnanimity which did him the greatest honour, he acknowledged to his Parishioners and to the world, his former deficiencies. "For twelve years," said he to the people of his Parish, have I been endeavouring to promote your reformation by delivering the doctrines and precepts of morality, and I know not whether in that period, I have reformed a single individual." He ought, according to his own present belief to have preached "CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED." The article in the New Encyclopedia, to which we have alluded, attracted great attention. It was soon republished in a separate volume, and was eagerly sought for, and widely circulated. With the exception of *Lesslie's Short Method with the Deists*, it is the most perfect argument that we have ever seen on the subject of the Evidences of Christianity. A man must be very wise indeed, or very stupid to read it without receiving instruction. We would most earnestly recommend this little work to our countrymen, and especially to young men who have capacity to enjoy sound philosophical reasoning, delivered in a form of sufficient elegance.

A work of such distinguished ability soon drew its author from his obscurity, and he was called to the Pastoral Charge of the Tron Church in Glasgow. A number of Ministers in that City, agreed to deliver weekly lectures in rotation. The series of discourses preached by Dr. Chalmers has been published, and forms the very interesting volume to which we would now direct the attention of our readers.

We cannot however forbear expressing the pleasure afforded by seeing, now and then, but certainly at long intervals, a work of real merit issuing from the American press. Amidst the enormous quantities of trash, which are continually thrown out, such a work is like a fountain in a desert, or a green islet in a troubled sea, pleasant to the sight, and refreshing to the heart.

The title page of the work under consideration gives a very general view of the subject and the manner in which it is treated. Considering this series of Sermons as a whole, we shall for the benefit of the reader, endeavour to present an analysis of it, and an abstract of the author's argument. The volume contains seven sermons.—1st. A sketch of the Modern Astronomy. Text, Ps. viii, 3, 4.—2nd. The Modesty of true Science, I Cor. viii, 2.—3rd. On the extent of the Divine condescension, Ps. cxliii, 5, 6.—4th. On the knowledge of man's moral history in the distant places of the Creation. I Pet. i, 12.—5th. On the sympathy that is felt for man in the distant places of Creation. Luke xv, 7.—6th. On the contest for an ascendancy over man amongst the higher orders of intelligence. Col. ii, 15.—7th. On the slender influence of mere taste and sensibility in matters of religion. Ezek. xxxiii, 32.—The whole work may be divided into three general heads—The statement of an objection against Christianity—The refutation of the objection—And the use to be made of the truth thus secured against assault.

I. The magnificence and splendour of the heavens have in every age excited the admiration both of the savage and the sage. But that moon, and those stars, what are they? It has been reserved for these latter times, to solve this great and interesting question. Distance uniformly lessens the apparent magnitude of bodies. The heavenly bodies appear small only because they are remote. It is known that the sun is a globe, by many thousand times, exceeding the dimensions of the earth which we inhabit; the moon has the size of a world; and most of the planets are considerably larger than the earth. These bodies, too, revolve on their axes, and take their annual journeys round the sun; have the vicissitudes of day and night, of summer and winter. Shall we say that their resemblance to our globe stops here? Would the architect of nature, supreme in wisdom as he is in power, call these stately mansions into existence, and leave them unoccupied? Can we conceive that this scene of magnificence is mere empty parade; that silence and solitude reign throughout the mighty empire of nature; and that no worshippers of the Deity are to be found through the wide extent of these vast and unmeasurable regions? In proportion as the science of Astronomy advances towards perfection, we can discover new points of resemblance between the earth, and the other bodies in the planetary system. We can see that the surface of one is diversified by mountains and vallies; that another is surrounded by an atmosphere which may support the respiration of animals; of a third that clouds are suspended over it, which may pour down their fertilizing showers; and of a fourth, that a white colour spreads over its northern regions as its winter advances, and that at the approach of summer, this whiteness is dissipated—giving

room to suppose that all these worlds bear a strong resemblance to our own.

No one can assign a limit to the discoveries of future ages. The day may be coming, when instruments of observation will be inconceivably more powerful than they are at present; and may lay open to our view, the vestiges of art and industry, and intelligence; may discover summer throwing its green mantle over extensive tracts, and winter leaving them naked and colourless; may even point out the bounds of their empires, and their splendid cities, and enable future Astronomers to construct maps of the planets with all the minuteness of topographical exactness. Then it will be proved by ocular demonstration that these glorious bodies, are worlds teeming with life, and that on them all are fit habitations for the worshippers of the Deity. This conclusion is now supported only by analogy; but the analogy is so strong; that none are unconvinced by it.

But is there nothing beyond the limits of our system? There are only five or six planetary orbs visible to the naked eye. What, then, is that multitude of other lights which sparkle in our firmament, and fill the whole concave of heaven with innumerable splendours? They do not move round the sun; but to all common observation remain immoveable. What then are they? The first thing in relation to them which strikes a scientific observer, is their immeasurable distance. If a body were projected from the sun with the velocity of a cannon ball, it would take hundreds of thousands of years before it described that mighty interval which separates the nearest of the fixed stars from our sun and our system. If our earth, which moves more than a million and a half of miles a day, were hurried from its orbit, and should take its rapid flight over this immense tract, it would not in six thousand years, have arrived at the end of its journey. These calculations may be demonstrated by the most rigid geometry; but no human imagination can form an adequate conception of these immense numbers—What then are these stars placed so far beyond the limits of our system? They must be masses of enormous magnitude, or they could not be seen at so great a distance. The light which they give must proceed from themselves; for light reflected from some other quarter, would not be carried to such immense distances.—Distant as these bodies are, there is one point of resemblance between some of them and the sun which has not escaped the observation of Astronomers. As the sun performs a revolution on its own centre, so do these immense globes of light—And were they created in vain? Why resist the conclusion that each of these stars is the token of a system as vast and splendid as ours? In yon gilded canopy of heaven, we see the broad aspect of the universe, where each shining point presents us with a sun, and each sun with a system of worlds—where the Divinity reigns in all the grandeur of his attributes—where he peoples immensity with his wonders, and travels in the greatness of his strength through the dominions of one vast unlimited monarchy.

If we ask the number of these stars—the naked eye can take in a thousand, and the best telescope which human genius has contrived can take in eighty millions. But why subject the universe to the eye

of man, or the power of his genius? Fancy may expatiate beyond all that is visible—and shall we have the boldness to say that there is nothing *there*; that the wonders of the Almighty are at an end, because we can no longer trace his footsteps; that his omnipotency is exhausted, because human art can no longer follow him; that the creative energy of God has sunk into repose, because the imagination is enfeebled by the magnitude of its efforts, and can keep no longer on the wing through those mighty tracts which shoot far beyond what eye hath seen, or the heart of man hath conceived—which sweep endlessly along, and merge into an awful and mysterious infinity.*

And what is this earth in the immensity which teems with worlds—and what are they who occupy it? The universe at large would suffer as little in its splendour and variety, by the destruction of our planet, as the verdure, and magnitude of a forest would suffer by the fall of a single leaf. We differ from the leaf only in this circumstance, that it would require the operation of greater elements to destroy us. But these elements exist. Internal fires might lift their energies to the surface of our planet and destroy it. The sudden formation of elastic matter in the bowels of the earth, might explode it into fragments; the exhalation of noxious air might so taint the atmosphere as to dispeople the world: a comet might pass so near as to hurry our globe to the sun, or drag it to the outer regions of the planetary system. We, who tread the earth with so much confidence, are at the mercy of devouring elements, which if let loose upon us by the hand of the Almighty, would spread solitude, and silence, and death, over the dominions of the world. This littleness and insecurity make the protection of the Almighty so dear to us, and bring, with such emphasis, to every pious bosom the holy lessons of humility and gratitude. But this reflection has been appropriated to the use of infidelity, and the very language of the text has been made to bear an application of hostility to the Christian faith. “What is man, that God should be mindful of him; or the son of man, that he should deign to visit him”? Is it likely, says the Infidel, that God would send his eternal Son to die for the puny occupiers of so insignificant a province in the mighty field of his creation? Are we the befitting objects of so great and so signal an interposition? How shall we reconcile the greatness of that movement which was made in heaven for the redemption of fallen man, with the comparative meanness and obscurity of our species? This is a popular argument against Christianity, and has no small influence on the amateurs of a superficial philosophy. Every such argument should be met and manfully confronted. It is a discreditable surrender of our religion, to act as if she had any thing to fear from the ingenuity of her most accomplished adversaries. The author engages in his undertaking, under the full impression that something may be found to combat infidelity in all its forms—and in the sequel he refutes the objection which has here been so forcibly stated.

* Some interesting speculations, serving to magnify our conceptions of the universe are here unavoidably omitted.

II. The proverb of Solomon, where it is said, that the heart knoweth its own bitterness is full of important and profound wisdom. Every man knoweth his own trials, his own peculiar feelings and difficulties, better than he can get any of his neighbours to perceive them. We all desire to engross the sympathies of others with our own hardships and sorrows. But labour as we may, we cannot make an adequate conveyance of our sensations, and all our circumstances into another understanding.

This observation is intended to prepare the way for a second. There are perhaps no two sets of human beings who understand each other less than the busy public on the one hand, and the man of close and studious retirement on the other. Yet when the philosopher has made some brilliant discovery, his name will circulate through the whole of civilized society; and be handed down to succeeding ages with a lustre, which eclipses all the splendour of conquest. This is the case with Newton—He at this moment stands forth to the public eye, in a brighter array of glory, than circles the memory of any man of former generations. But the majority of men are utterly in the dark, as to that which constitutes the chief merit of the philosophy of Newton. They see the result of his labours, but they know not how to appreciate the difficulty or extent of them. He discovered the mechanism of the planetary system; the composition of light; and the cause of those alternate movements which take place on the waters of the ocean. These are his visible achievements, and are regarded as the monuments of his greatness.—But he deserves as much credit and admiration for the articles which he excluded from the philosophical creed, as for those which he added to it. It was a property of his mind to keep firm hold of every position which had proof to substantiate it—but it is a property equally characteristic, and indeed forms the leading peculiarity of his investigations, that he, *with unshaken resolution, excluded every doctrine that was destitute of proof.* The strength of his philosophy lay as much in refusing admittance to that which wanted evidence, as in giving place and occupancy to that which possessed it. By these two maxims the peculiarity which characterises and ennobles the philosophy of Newton may be easily explained. We mean the combination of its strength and its modesty. Its strength is proved by the fulfilment of the enterprize, by which the mechanism of unnumbered worlds has been brought within the grasp of the human understanding. This was effected by the steady and patient application of the legitimate instruments of discovery, by touching what is tangible, looking to that which is visible, and computing that which was measurable.—Its modesty is evinced by this, that as soon as you go beyond the limits of sensible observation, the genuine disciples of this school cast away all their confidence. On the ground of experiments none are more bold and decisive—off this ground none more humble and cautious. They choose neither to know, nor believe, nor assert where evidence is wanting; and they will sit with all the patience of a scholar until they have found it. They are never unmindful of the limit which separates the region of observation from that of conjecture; and they give you positive opinion only when they have

indisputable proof—but when they have no such proof, they have no such opinion. Thus, with all the accomplishments of philosophy, they sit as humble pupils at the book of nature, with all the docility of conscious ignorance. Such was Newton, than whom there perhaps never lighted on our world one, in whose character greater force of genius, and deeper humility were blended. But it is not so with some who have succeeded him.—They have winged their way into forbidden regions—have crossed that circle by which the field of observation is enclosed—and there have they debated and dogmatized with all the pride of intolerant assurance. Let us suppose that one of these philosophers should be so extravagant as to pass from the astronomy of the planets, and the natural history of their animal and vegetable kingdoms—He might get hold of some vague and general analogies to throw an air of plausibility around his speculation. He might pass from the botany of the different regions of our globe, and make loose and confident applications to each of the other planets, according to its distance from the sun, and the inclination of its axis to the plane of its orbit; and out of some such slender materials, he might make up a philosophical romance, displaying great ingenuity, and having the colour of truth and consistency spread over it. A superficial public might be delighted by the eloquence of such a composition, and even impressed by its arguments; but the man of all the ages and countries in the world who would have the least respect for such a treatise, would be Newton. He would see, at once, that the subject lay at a hopeless distance from the field of legitimate observation.—It would be enough for him that it lay beyond the reach of the telescope.

But let us conceive again that this same adventurous philosopher should shift his speculation from the plants of another world to the character of its inhabitants. Here again he may work up a plausible theory. But every man of plain understanding knows that this ambitious enquirer has got beyond his reach, has renounced the modesty of true science, and is ignorant of the limit of his own faculties.

But to what point are these illustrations to be directed? In the astronomical objection to Christianity, there is first an assertion, and then an argument. The assertion is, that this religion is set up for the exclusive benefit of our minute and solitary world. The argument is, that God would not lavish such a quantity of attention on so insignificant a field. Were the assertion admitted the argument would be opposed; but to lay open the full futility of the objection, we must expose the utter want of evidence for the assertion. How do infidels know that christianity is set up for the exclusive benefit of this earth and its inhabitants? They are challenged to the proof of their positive announcement. In this objection we see the same rash and gratuitous procedure, which marked the cases supposed for the sake of illustration; the same glaring transgression on the very spirit of the philosophy which infidels profess to idolize. The argument depends on an assertion which they can verify in no way but by some supernatural message. The theology of the planets lies as much beyond the field of observation as their natural history or politics; and there-

fore the assumption that christianity is the religion of this one world, or that the religion of other worlds is not our very christianity, can have no influence upon a mind that has derived its habits of thinking from the rigorous school of Newton. It is presumption to speculate on the details of God's administration in other worlds—For any thing that the bold Philosopher can tell, sin has found its way into them—Messengers of heavenly mercy have been commissioned from the throne of the Eternal; and the glories of redemption have been displayed to an extent as wide as the discoveries of Astronomy.

Here, however, we stop—nor shall we grope among these mysteries. Be it remembered that it is not the christian who is pitching his adventurous flight to the secret things that belong unto God. It is the champion of infidelity—It is he who props his unchristian argument by presumptions fetched out of those obscurities which lie on the other side of an impassable barrier—It is he who has mustered against the truths of the gospel resting as it does on evidence within the reach of his faculties, an objection, for the truth of which he has no evidence whatever—It is he who sets his fancy afloat among unknown regions, and most unphilosophically attempts to draw aside the veil, which nothing but a message from the Eternal Governor can remove. Altho' "Newton wrote a commentary on the book of Revelation" he did not pretend to determine the moral condition of the inhabitants of the planets. When he turned his attention to the Bible, he brought a mind tutored by the philosophy of facts—and when he looked at its credentials, he saw the stamp and impress of this philosophy on every one of them—He saw that the religion of the Gospels, is a religion of facts; and he embraced it with the same firm convictions of its truth with which he maintained the philosophy, that has, with so much glory, handed down his name to posterity.

It is important that the principle which has been here discussed, should be familiarized to the mind. It may furnish an antidote not only against the infidelity of astronomers, but against all infidelity. We are not unaware indeed of the diversity of complexion which infidelity puts on. It has one appearance in the man of science—another in the refined voluptuary—another still, in the common-place railer—and so on, continually shifting its forms, as the habits and sentiments of those, in whose hearts it has made a lodgement, happen to differ. Yet that which has dispossessed all these people of their religion, exists in their minds in the shape of a position, which they hold to be true, but which, by no legitimate evidence they have ever realized—It is a wilful fancy or presumption of their own, which could not stand the test of that principle which gives to *observation* the precedence of theory.

This principle will not only break up the infidelity existing in the world, but will carry us with all the docility of children to the Bible. Without the testimony of an authentic messenger from heaven, we know nothing of the counsels of heaven. There is no moral telescope that can bring to our observation the doings or deliberations that take place in the sanctuary of the Eternal. We must wait, in all the humility of conscious ignorance till the Lord himself shall break silence,

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It is important that the principle which has been here discussed, should be familiarized to the mind. It may furnish an antidote not only against the infidelity of astronomers, but against all infidelity. We are not unaware indeed of the diversity of complexion which infidelity puts on. It has one appearance in the man of science—another in the refined voluptuary—another still, in the common-place railler—and so on, continually shifting its forms, as the habits and sentiments of those, in whose hearts it has made a lodgement, happen to differ. Yet that which has dispossessed all these people of their religion, exists in their minds in the shape of a position, which they hold to be true, but which, by no legitimate evidence they have ever realized—It is a wilful fancy or presumption of their own, which could not stand the test of that principle which gives to *observation* the precedence of theory.

This principle will not only break up the infidelity existing in the world, but will carry us with all the docility of children to the Bible. Without the testimony of an authentic messenger from heaven, we know nothing of the counsels of heaven. There is no moral telescope that can bring to our observation the doings or deliberations that take place in the sanctuary of the Eternal. We must wait, in all the humility of conscious ignorance till the Lord himself shall break silence,

and make his counsel known. And now that a professed communication from heaven is before us, with all the solidity of experimental evidence on its side, and nothing but the reveries of daring speculation to oppose it, what is the consistent, the rational, the philosophical use to be made of this document, but to sit down with school-boy humility to turning its pages, and conning its lessons, and submitting the exercise of our judgment to its information and testimony.

The total want of evidence to support the position of the infidel astronomer having been shown, the controversy with him is reduced to the business of arguing against a mere possibility. But let us admit the assertion of the unbeliever, and take a view of the argument, which has been constructed upon it. Let it be recollected that it runs in this form. "Our world, compared with the universe, is so paltry an affair; in its whole dimensions it is so minute; and all its interests are so trivial, that the universal monarch would not have put forth such power for the sake of our degraded species; the Son of God would not have sojourned among us, shared our infirmities, and crowned the whole scene of humiliation by the agonies and disgrace of a cruel martyrdom."—Before entering on the proper answer to this objection, it may be observed that it goes to strip the Deity of an attribute which forms a wonderful addition to the glories of his character. The support, and regulation of the universe afford mighty evidence of his power and wisdom; the strewing of immensity with the habitations of life and intelligence, gives delightful proof of the pleasure taken by the Almighty in communicating happiness; to know that his comprehensive mind grasps the amplitude of nature, to the very uttermost of its boundaries, gives an exalted idea of his knowledge; but to know at the same time that he impresses a movement on the minutest wheels of the machinery that works around us; that he lavishes the inexhaustible resources of his wisdom on the beauties, varieties, and arrangements of every scene, however humble, and of every field, however narrow, of creation; that every individual in every corner of his dominions is as effectually seen to, as if that individual were the object of exclusive and individual care, brings home to every bosom a nearer and more affecting view of the power, wisdom, knowledge, and benevolence of the Lord God Almighty, the Sovereign of all worlds. And, to apply this train of sentiment to the matter before us, let us suppose that one among the countless myriads of worlds, should be visited by a moral pestilence, which should bring them under the sanction of an immutable law; it were no disparagement to God, should he by an act of righteous indignation, sweep this offence from the universe which it deformed.—But would it not throw the softening of a most exquisite tenderness over the character of the Almighty, should we see him putting forth every expedient to reclaim to himself those children who had wandered away from him—and few as they are when compared with the host of his obedient worshippers, would it not just impart to his attribute of compassion the infinity of the Godhead, that rather than lose a single world, which had turned to its own way, he should send the messengers of peace to woo and to welcome it back again; and if justice demanded so mighty a sa-

crifice, and the law behoved to be so magnified and made honourable would it not throw a moral sublime over the goodness of the Deity, should he lay upon his own Son the burden of its atonement, that he might again smile upon the world, and hold out the sceptre of invitation to all its families? The argument of the infidel goes therefore to expunge a perfection from the character of God. It limits his attributes. It perversely misinterprets the fact that God can diffuse the benefits of his power and goodness over such a variety of worlds; and rashly concludes that he cannot or will not bestow so much goodness on one of those worlds, as a professed revelation from heaven has announced.

The objection under discussion will receive its answer if it can be met by the following position:—that God, in addition to the bare faculty of dwelling on a multiplicity of objects at one and the same time, has this faculty in such wonderful perfection, that he can attend as fully, and provide as richly, and manifest all his attributes as illustriously, on every one of these objects, as if the rest had no existence, and no place whatever in his government and his thoughts.

For the evidence of this position, an appeal is made, in the first place, to the personal history of each individual among you. "It is in him that we live, and move, and have our being." His eye is upon every hour of my existence. His spirit is intimately present with every thought of my heart. In the silence of night, when my eyelids have closed, and I have sunk into unconsciousness, the observant eye of him who never slumbers, is upon me—he who is now at work in the remotest domains of nature, and of providence, is also at my right hand to uphold me in the exercise of all my feelings and faculties. Now what God is doing for me, he is doing for every individual of this world's population. And shall we ungratefully affirm that the multitude of other worlds has withdrawn any portion of his benevolence from that occupied by us? or that he whose eye is upon every separate family of the earth, would not lavish all the riches of his unsearchable attributes on some high plan of pardon and immortality, in behalf of its countless generations?

But, again, were the mind of God so fatigued with the care of other worlds, or so occupied by their government as the objection supposes, should we not behold some traces of neglect or carelessness in his management of ours—some evidence of its master being overcrowded with the variety of his other engagements? But in the whole field of observation, do we witness a single indication of God sparing himself, of God reduced to languor or inattention by the weight of his employments, by his vast superintendance?

Surely when we look abroad on the wondrous scene immediately before us, and contemplate its ceaseless activity, and all the beauties of the garniture by which it is adorned, and all the marks of benevolence which abound in it, and think that it is the same God, who holds the universe with all its systems in the hollow of his hand, that pencils every flower, and nourishes every blade of grass, and enriches this humble department of nature that I occupy with all its charms and accommodations—then, if a message bearing every mark of au-

thence should profess to come from God, and inform of his high designs of mercy, it is not for me, in the face of all this evidence, to reject it as an imposture, because astronomers have told me that he has so many other worlds, and other orders of being to attend to.

Still further, it is the telescope which has, by the discovery of distant worlds, put infidelity in possession of the argument, against which we contend. But about the time of its invention, another instrument was formed, which laid open a scene no less wonderful, and neutralized the whole argument. This was the microscope. The one discovers a system in every star; the other a world in every atom. The one teaches that this globe with all its appendages is but a grain of sand on the broad field of the universe; the other that every grain of sand may harbour within it the tribes and families of a busy population. The one tells me of the insignificance of the world I tread on; the other tells me that in the leaves of every forest, in the flowers of every garden, and the waters of every rivulet, there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as the glories of the firmament. All these discoveries are in opposition to the argument of the infidel astronomer. The telescope has discovered that no magnitude however vast is beyond the grasp of the divinity—but the microscope shows that no minuteness, however shrunk from the notice of the human eye, is beneath the condescension of his regard. The telescope informs us that the Almighty is at work in regions more distant than geometry has ever measured, and among worlds more manifold than numbers have ever reached; and the microscope assures us that he fills the recesses of every atom with the intimacy of his presence, and gives a close and separate attention to every spot and corner of the universe. They therefore who think that God will not put forth such power, such goodness, and such condescension in behalf of this world, as are ascribed to him in the New Testament, because he has so many worlds to attend to, *think of him as a man*. They confine their view to the informations of the telescope, and altogether neglect the informations of the other instrument. They only find room in their minds for one attribute of a large and general superintendance; and keep out of view the equally impressive proofs of a minute and multiplied attention to all that diversity of operations, where it is he that worketh all in all. In this view of the universe it would be a transgression of sound argument, as well as daring impiety to limit the doings of this unsearchable God—and, should a professed revelation from heaven, tell me of an act of condescension in behalf of some separate world, so wonderful that angels desired to look into it, and the Eternal Son had to move from his seat of glory to carry it into accomplishment, all I ask is the evidence of such a revelation; for let it tell me as much as it may of God letting himself down for the benefit of one single province of his dominions, this is no more than what I see lying in numberless examples before me; and now that the microscope has unveiled the wonders of another region, I see strewed around me, with a profusion which baffles every attempt to comprehend it, the evidence that there is no one portion of the universe of God, too minute for his notice, nor too humble for the

visitations of his care. It is wonderful that God should be so unincumbered by the concerns of a universe, that he can give constant attendance to every moment of every individual; that he whose eye is at every instant on so many worlds, should have filled this world with traces of varied design and benevolence; that the God whose presence fills immensity, and who spreads the canopy of his administration over all its dwelling places, should with an energy as fresh and as unexpended, as if the work of creation were just begun, turn him to the neighbourhood around us, and lavish on every hand-breadth, all the exuberance of his goodness, and crowd it with many thousand varieties of conscious existence, but great as these wonders are, they do not burden the mind with a single doubt—And upon what evidence, are they believed? In very many cases, the evidence of testimony: In like manner, it is wonderful that God should be so interested in the redemption of a single world as to send forth his well beloved Son upon the errand, and that he, mighty to save, should put forth his strength, and travail in the greatness of it, to accomplish this high purpose of love: but wonders have been multiplied around us, and when evidence has been given of their truth, we have resigned all our judgments concerning the unsearchable God, and rested in the faith of them. I ask no more in favour of the the revelation of the Bible: take up Christianity as you would a question of philosophy; examine it by proper evidence—and take along with you in this enquiry, what you should have learned upon other fields—even the depth both of the riches and knowledge of God, that his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out.

But the argument is not yet exhausted. The objection of the infidel has been disposed of by showing the evidence every where around us, of God combining with the largeness of a vast and mighty superintendence, which reaches the very outskirts of the creation, the faculty of bestowing as much attention, and exercising as complete and manifold wisdom and lavishing as profuse and inexhaustible goodness on each of its humblest departments, as if it formed the whole of his territory. Thus far in the argument however, the earth has been regarded as isolated from the rest of the universe—But according to the way in which the astronomical objection has been commonly met, the earth is looked upon as a member of a more extended system. The Christian apologist not only overthrows the position of the unbeliever, by showing the entire want of observation, or experiment to support it; but he passes on to the distinct and positive testimony of the Bible, and pursues a most interesting subject of legitimate and sober speculation.

[*This must be deferred until our next number.*]

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Obituary.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

IT is with deep regret that I find myself called upon to announce the unexpected and apparently premature *death* of Dr. JAMES W. HUNT, of Charlotte County, Virginia; who departed this life on the 9th of this instant, having just reached the 27th year of his age.

We are not, indeed, permitted to imagine that any one is ever removed from the world before the fittest time for that important event is come—Is the great work of life accomplished? Are we prepared for the enjoyments of a better world? It cannot, surely, in that case, be a misfortune to be, at an early period of life, rescued from the cares, the afflictions, and the temptations of the present state. But what if a young transgressor should be arrested in a state of impenitence and unbelief? This, it will readily be acknowledged, is a most afflictive consideration. It seems, however, utterly irreconcilable with our ideas of the Divine mercy to suppose, that an individual of our apostate race is in this way deprived of any opportunities of repentance and reformation which would have been improved had his days been prolonged. But when I began this letter I had no design of introducing any reflections of this nature. No: my intention was to exhibit our young friend as another witness to the reality of our holy religion; and another striking example of Christian fortitude in the solemn hour of death.

Dr. James W. Hunt was a son of Mr. William Pitt Hunt of Maryland, an attorney of good repute, and undoubted piety; grand son to the Rev. James Hunt of the same state, the much esteemed Pastor of Bladensburg, and Cap. John Congregations; and great grand son to Mr. James Hunt of Hanover, whose testimony for the truth as-it in Jesus in the face of strenuous opposition, will transmit his name with honour to late posterity: In the maternal line of his ancestors, we might mention, with high respect, his grand mother Agness Watkins, on account of her unaffected piety, and many amiable qualities—and it would be great injustice to pass over without particular mention the grace of God which appeared with such evidence and lustre in the life and death of his great grand father Joseph Morton. What a privilege! Greatly would I prefer such a parentage to the most illustrious royal extraction.

Might not the subject of this memoir be justly considered as a striking illustration of the gracious promise:—"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed." Not that all the descendants of pious parents are pious themselves. But they have certainly a goodly heritage—a heritage which if rightly improved, will be better to them than the largest temporal estate. "Lord I am thy servant the son of thine hand maid."

The contagious nature of vice has, in all ages, been the subject of much complaint. It is, however, comfortable to reflect, that virtue has also a diffusive influence. When James W. Hunt, first separated himself from his young acquaintances to take his seat at a COMMUNION TABLE, it was to one of them, at least, a very interesting and instructive scene; and proved the means of making upon his heart, an impression which, it is hoped, no length of time will ever be able to efface.

To secular interests, Dr. Hunt was, perhaps, rather inattentive. Certain it is, that he was generous to an extreme. His morals were pure: and as a friend and associate, he was greatly beloved. In his profession, he is said to have been highly respectable. But what is

now the principal source of consolation to his surviving friends and relations, is the hope that their loss is his unspeakable gain. And it affords me much satisfaction, to have it in my power to confirm this hope by a reference to the circumstances attending his last illness and death as well as to the uniform tenor of his life.

From the first moments of apprehended danger, he appeared to be perfectly resigned to the will of God—willing to live or to die as He should appoint. His confidence in the Divine mercy, and the merits of his Saviour, which he had generally possessed in the time of his health, instead of forsaking him, became more and more assured as he approached the confines of eternity. For him death had no terrors. Seldom has Christian heroism been better exemplified than in the last hours of Dr. James W. Hunt. Reader, remember, that thou also art mortal. And be persuaded to prepare without delay to meet thy God. Live the *life*, and then thou also shall die the *death* of the righteous!

The following prayer was found among his papers, and is supposed to have been composed a few days before his last illness. It appears to have been hastily written, and left unfinished.

“Great and good art thou, O Lord. Heaven is thy throne, and the earth is thy footstool. Goodness and truth are thy constant attendants. Justice fills thy throne, and mercy completes thy glorious perfections. How great the distance by nature between thy august majesty, and degenerate rebellious man! I confess before thee I have sinned times and ways out of number; and wert thou to enter into judgment with me for one of a thousand of my offences, I could not stand. But glory to thy great name, thou hast so loved the world, as to send thine only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. O Lord, I would believe, help thou my unbelief. Fill my heart with thy love. Teach me how to worship thee aright: for thou must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Give me the influences of thy Holy Spirit, to guide and direct me in my journey through life. May I walk through the dark and gloomy valley of death, leaning by faith on thy promises. Thou hast promised to reject none who call on thee in sincerity, and a steadfast resolution to turn from the errors of their ways. O Lord, turn me and I shall be turned. Give me that faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Give a grateful heart for the many comforts of life. I confess to thee I have been ungrateful, and deserve the hardness of heart and blindness of mind with which I am now afflicted. O melt my hard and stony heart, and no longer withhold from me the light of thy countenance. Search me and try me—prove my ways. Show me that I have no righteousness of my own. Cleanse me by the blood of thy Son. Make me holy as thou art holy. May I delight in thy law after the inward man. May I hate sin as my worst enemy. *** O may my treasure be in heaven where sin can never enter to pollute my joys—that my heart may be continually near my God.—I come before thee all polluted and defiled with sin; weary and heavy laden; and throwing myself at the foot of the cross, in dependence upon divine aid I resolve,

We are not, indeed, permitted to imagine that any one is ever removed from the world before the fittest time for that important event is come—Is the great work of life accomplished? Are we prepared for the enjoyments of a better world? It cannot, surely, in that case, be a misfortune to be, at an early period of life, rescued from the cares, the afflictions, and the temptations of the present state. But what if a young transgressor should be arrested in a state of impenitence and unbelief? This, it will readily be acknowledged, is a most afflictive consideration. It seems, however, utterly irreconcilable with our ideas of the Divine mercy to suppose, that an individual of our apostate race is in this way deprived of any opportunities of repentance and reformation which would have been improved had his days been prolonged. But when I began this letter I had no design of introducing any reflections of this nature. No: my intention was to exhibit our young friend as another witness to the reality of our holy religion; and another striking example of Christian fortitude in the solemn hour of death.

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that if I perish I will perish only there. Where O Lord shall I find thee? I long to see thy face beaming in mercy through thy Son upon my benighted soul. O leave me not to grovel in the dark any longer; but remove the scales from my eyes that I may know my real character and state. Help me to seek with persevering earnestness the salvation that is in Jesus. There is no other name given among men whereby a sinner can be saved. * * * On the promises of the gospel of thy Son I depend, and on nothing that I can do: for I have forfeited all claim to thy favour. I am fully convinced, that there is so much sin mixed with all I do, that even my best performances would sink me into everlasting ruin. I have lost all claim to thy favour on account of my own righteousness; and I rest entirely upon the merits of my Saviour. He has died that I might live. He became poor that I through his poverty might become rich. Blessed be thy name for so glorious a plan of salvation. Blessed be thy name that thou canst be just and justify a sinner. * * * Thanks be to thy name for the great and precious promises of thy gospel. Thanks to thy goodness for blessings both temporal and eternal. May the hope that I have of eternal life be strengthened.— —”

“ Behold he PRAYETH! still I see,
The suppliant on his bended knee,
With hands uplift and tearful eye
And bosom heaved by many a sigh;
While the descended spark of fire
Kindles and hallows each desire.

His cries address th’ Eternal throne,
Accessible thro’ Christ alone;
And urge, with confidence, his plea,
Thro’ Mercy Sovereign, rich and free;
And, by his ADVOCATE preferred,
Th’ availing plea, in Heaven is heard;
While beamings of his Father’s face
Confess and cheer the child of Grace.

Behold he PRAISES! pass’d the shade
And vale where the last foes invade,
He contemplates the BLESS’D SUPREME,
And raptured by their sacred theme
Unites with all the saints to sing
The glorious grace of Zion’s King.

When death had summoned thee to rest,
Thy pillow was thy Saviour’s breast;
And the sweet lustre of his face
Diffused o’er thine a lovely grace.
And is it buried in the dust?
At the revival of the Just,
Thou, like the bright and morning STAR,
Shalt glow and send thy beams afar.

While we who *loved, lament* thee here,
 And drop the tributary tear,
 The Saints all welcome thee to rest:
 And in thy Father's presence bless'd,
 No bursting sigh of mourning friends,
 To interrupt thy peace, ascends.

Rest, then, pure Spirit, with thy God!
 And while we climb to his abode,
 In fading age, or bloom of youth,
 We learn this salutary truth,
 To guide the remnant of our days,
 That PRAYER the *Prelude* is of PRAISE.



LITERRARY NOTICE.

WE have lately had the pleasure of reading *Essays on Hypochondriacal, and other Nervous Affections.* By John Reid, M. D. &c.

This work is written with so little use of technical phrases, as to be easily understood by ordinary readers; and the style is so lively, the remarks are often so happily illustrated by striking comparisons, and the descriptions are sometimes so fraught with simple eloquence, as to make the book a most agreeable treat to any man of taste. This, however, is not its greatest praise. The admonitions of the author are calculated to promote health and comfort, and to subserve the cause of virtue. It is really pleasing to see a man of his talents, and profession, coming out as he does in favour of the true interests of society. The work is avowedly popular, and intended for general circulation. We heartily wish that it may be read by many. As a specimen we present a few extracts from the *Essay on Intemperance.*

“It is seldom that debauchery separates at once the thread of vitality. There occurs, for the most part, a wearisome and painful interval between the first loss of a capacity for enjoying life, and the period of its ultimate extinction. This circumstance, it is to be presumed, is out of the consideration of those persons who, with a prodigality more extravagant than that of Cleopatra, dissolve the pearl of health in the goblet of intemperance. The slope towards the grave these victims of indiscretion find no easy descent. The scene is darkened, long before the curtain falls. Having exhausted prematurely all that is delicious in the cup of life, they are obliged to swallow afterwards the bitter dregs. Death is the last, but not the worst result of intemperance.”

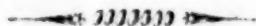
“But it ought to be in the knowledge of the debauchee, that each attack of casual, or return of periodical distemper, deducts something from the strength and structure of his frame. Some leaves fall from the tree of life every time its trunk is shaken. It may thus be disrobed of its beauty, and made to betray the dreary nakedness of a far advanced autumn, long before that season could in the regular course of nature, even have commented.”

"The strongest liquors are the most weakening. In proportion to the power which the draught possesses, is that which it ultimately deducts from the person into whose stomach it is habitually received."

"To reprobate the use of strong liquors altogether, may be considered as a kind of *prudery* in temperance; as carrying this virtue to an unnecessary and even preposterous extent. But prudery, it should be recollected, consists not so much in the excess of a virtue as in the affectation of it. The real prudes in regimen are those who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel;" who would have great scruple perhaps in drinking a glass of wine, but who would not hesitate every day of their lives to ingurgitate, in a pharmaceutical shape, draughts composed principally of the worst and most concentrated spirits. Tinctures are medicinal drams. The habitual use of them can be regarded only as a more specious and decorous mode of intemperance. In this may be said to consist the privileged debauchery of many a nervous valetudinarian. A female of decorum and delicacy may, in this way, ruin, most effectually, her health, without, in the slightest degree, impairing her reputation. She may allay the qualms of the stomach, without the danger of occasioning any more disagreeable qualms of conscience."

The whole Essay is worthy of most diligent perusal.—We would recommend it to our fellow-citizens, in the spirit of fervent zeal for their health and happiness, fully persuaded that while war "slays its thousands, intemperance slays its ten thousands."

The book may be bought of Messrs. Fitzwhysonn & Potter.



ANECDOTE OF LORD LITTLETON.

The late lord Littleton was the son of a nobleman, who to his other high qualities added that of exalted piety. The son was gay, witty, and licentious. His father often remonstrated with him on his way of living in the serious and affectionate spirit of a Christian father. The young lord tells us that on a certain occasion these remonstrances had considerable effect. His father had urged him to pray—he went into his room for that intent—and had bent his knees for prayer, when it occurred to him that somebody might see him through the key-hole. He determined to rise and stop it; and while doing this, he thought that it might be as well to let down the curtains. Before he had finished this process however, some lively music that struck up in the street arrested his attention, and gave a flirt to his serious thoughts. He immediately girded on his sword, and went to the theatre; and here, said he, "the amusements of the place put me into humour with myself, and out of the humour of praying."

This honest testimony is worth something in settling the question whether it becomes a moral and religious people to encourage the theatre. Ought they to give support to that which erases religious impressions, which destroys the effect of a pious parent's admonitions, which puts people out of the humour of praying?