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[The following was written by an aged clergyman, who removed, about five and thirty years ago, from Virginia to Kentucky. It is a specimen of the sentiments and views of our fathers. The editor may be misled in his estimation of the merits of the piece by reverence for a much loved, and highly venerated relative; but he really thinks that it embodies much valuable advice appropriate to the present time, and worthy of most serious attention. Some of the opinions may indeed appear antiquated; yet perhaps it would be difficult to find in any communication of the same length, less that can be reasonably objected to, or more that it would be wise to treasure up in the memory and reduce to practice. The writer had the benefit of nearly a hundred years' experience, and was known to be a diligent and intelligent observer of men and things.]

**THE REV. DAVID RICE'S LAST ADVICE TO HIS CHILDREN,  
WHETHER HIS BY AFFINITY OR CONSANGUINITY: WRIT-  
TEN IN THE SEVENTY FOURTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.**

*My Dear Children,*

FOR several years past I have had transient thoughts of leaving behind me, when I departed this life, my dying advice to you. But neglecting to day what might be done to-morrow, I never sat about it, until since the death of your mother. This event of providence turned my attention more fully to the subject and made me more sensible of the duty.

My original intention was to have written this paper and kept it by me, until my death, and so to have ordered it, that you might have received it after my departure. But when I consider that I may possibly live some years yet, that you are advancing in life, that these and other circumstances render the advice proper at present, I determine to communicate it now. You are to consider it as my living advice to you while I live, and my dying advice, when I am dead.

What I call the days of my life are past; what remains is only the twilight. In the cool evening of age, after having

I ved seventy three years, and in the solemn posture of a dying father, in which I endeavour to realize myself, I address you.

Tho' I cannot bespeak your mother's concurrence with me now she is my help-mate no longer, I know she would most heartily have granted it. For your salvation and eternal happiness she was earnestly engaged in pleading with God, and that often when you thought or cared but little about it. Your best interest lay near her heart. I have reason to believe that she spent many hours in this way, when you and the rest of the family were asleep. Thus she ended the fatigues and labours of the day, which she underwent for your temporal support.

Though I only can speak to you now, you are to suppose that you hear us both; hear us, as dying parents speaking to dying children.

My dear children, frequently recollect and seriously realize that we must all appear at the dread tribunal of Jesus Christ; and that then you must give an account to him of the use, the improvement you have made of all the religious advantages and privileges you have enjoyed; and particularly those you have enjoyed in the family in which you have been educated. We had no reason to boast of our skill, diligence, or faithfulness. I am sure I have not. A consciousness of my deficiencies is one excitement to the present attempt. Yet remember your advantages were much greater than children generally enjoy, even in a christian land; and that a proportionable improvement in knowledge and piety is reasonably required.

To assist you in this improvement, and excite you to the duty is the principal object of this address, which I seriously make you, as from the verge of eternity. Hear that your souls may live.

In order to keep my ideas distinct, it is convenient to speak in order, on the doctrines of christianity—on christian morals, or practice—on your conduct as members of civil society.

#### I. On the doctrines of christianity.

Steadiness in our conduct is necessary in all we do, in order to acting with dignity and success. This dignity of conduct, and success in our religious endeavours is not likely to be obtained, unless we are well established in our principles and rules of our conduct. Therefore,

1. Endeavour without delay, if you have not already done it, to be fixed and well established in your religious sentiments respecting the fundamental doctrines of religion, the government of the christian church, and the scriptural modes of

worship; and carefully guard against a fickle wavering disposition or practice. Indulge not a fondness for religious novelties: generally speaking they are nothing better than seducing errors. Having carefully informed your judgments, strictly act according to them. At the same time extend your charity to others as far as reason and scripture will warrant you, treating christians of every denomination as brethren.

If I knew of any system of religion better than the one in which you have been educated, with all my heart I would advise you to embrace it: but I do not. If you would make progress in religion, which with all earnestness and diligence you ought to endeavour, do it by more fully understanding the old system, and more carefully reducing it to practice; and not by hunting after new ways to heaven.

This attention to steadiness in principle and practice, is very necessary in the present day; because this is a generation of great theoretical vanity and itch for novelties; by which the interests of religion and morality are greatly injured.

2. Chiefly study those doctrines which have a practical tendency or influence; which are calculated to produce holiness of heart or life. Matters of mere speculation, which do not immediately or remotely tend to holy practice, are not only useless; but often very hurtful. If they engage much of our attention, they foster the natural pride of our hearts, and produce uncharitableness towards our fellow men, whom we think inferior to us in knowledge of these things, or who differ from us in sentiment.

The doctrines I mean are those of the existence and perfections of God—His providential government of the natural and moral world—The infinite obligations we are under to him as our maker and benefactor—The great demerit of sin—The superlative love and condescension of God in providing a *Divine Redeemer*—Of the influence of the holy Spirit in a work of regeneration, sanctification, direction and consolation, rendered necessary by the depravity, blindness, weakness, and many sorrows of human nature—Justification by free grace thro' the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—The resurrection of those bodies which are, or ought to be temples of the Holy Ghost—The judgment of the world by Jesus Christ, who will give to every man according to his works—A future state of rewards and punishments, where the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. I say, let these and such other important doctrines as are connected with them, be your chief study; bind them to your hearts, feel their force, and habitually act under their influence.

3. Guard against all those doctrines which minister to human pride, either by lessening, in your estimation, human depravity and the evil and demerits of sin, or by undervaluing the character, offices and merits of Christ, and the grace of the gospel: such as that human depravity is a misfortune the posterity of Adam lie under in consequence of his original apostacy, and so our moral inability to do good, thence derived, is not blame worthy or deserving of punishment—That the atoning blood of Christ was not shed to satisfy the demands of law and justice against sinners—That we are justified in the sight of God by a righteousness wrought in us by our believing the truth.

Treat all your fellow creatures with kindness and with the respect due to their several characters; but have no religious communion with those nominal christians, whose principles sap the foundation of the christian religion, lest you thereby countenance their errors, and partake of their guilt and punishment.

With regard to those points in religion in which humble pious christians differ from you in principle or practice, make yourselves so far acquainted with them as to be able to give a reason sufficient to justify your choice. However dwell not on these points: delight not, nor pride yourselves, in disputing with your dissenting brethren: it sours the temper and dries up the fountain of benevolence in the heart. Men may differ widely as to the mode of worship, and yet be acceptable worshippers of God through Christ.

Though these points are not the essential doctrines or duties of religion, and the principal thing God requires is the heart, nevertheless endeavour in lesser matters to be fully satisfied in your own minds, and conscientiously act according to your own judgments. Never treat any thing revealed in the word of God, as an indifferent or trifling matter. So doing might lead to a habit of trifling with things sacred, and will be offensive to your brethren, and injurious to the cause of truth.

Though I warn you against religious controversy; yet if you have a talent for it, proper information, and providence call you to the work, be ready to defend the sacred scriptures, and the great doctrines they contain; but do it not thro' pride, nor for the honour of a victory; but with humility, meekness and love. At any rate never engage an enemy, until you are acquainted with the ground you occupy, your own force, and the forces of your antagonist.

Let alone the sceptics of the present day, improperly called deists. They have no digested system: what they chiefly

excel in is the art of puzzling. Argument is not what they want, it will have no force upon their minds; and will probably be answered by a quibble, a jest or a sneer: only pity them, pray for them, and set them a good example.

I would not advise you to read much of the sceptical writings of the present and last age: but if any of them should fall into your hands, never imagine that any thing they say is true, because it appears plausible or is new to you: by it never let your minds be warped aside from the truth, or brought into a doubtful state, until you procure the proper antidote to the poison, which upon enquiry you will find some able hand has provided. E. G. Never let Paine stagger your faith until you have read Watson.

## II. On christian morals, or practice.

I am not about to lay before you a code of moral precepts. These you have in the sacred scriptures. But as they are not drawn up in order, and particularly named and numbered, you will do well to make use of these helps with which the church is plentifully furnished. I only mean to give you a few cautions, and some serious advice.

1. Do not acquiesce in, or be contented with, those low attainments in religion, which are common among professors; such as you have seen in me and others. The standard of christian morals is sunk very low in the minds of christians, or they have very inadequate notions of the strictness thereof. Consider the great strictness in these as laid down in the sacred scriptures; that the commandments of God are exceeding broad; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and go on from one degree of strength to another, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Three things you know are necessary in order to our actions being spiritually good. The principle must be love to God and man: the motives, God's glory and man's good: the rule, God's laws contained in the sacred scriptures.

The great predominant principle of action must be, a sacred regard to God—A holy reverence of his divine majesty—A high esteem of his supreme excellency—Gratitude for his many mercies, special and common—Faith in Christ as an atoning high priest, a powerful intercessor, and as the head of influences. Without this sacred regard to God, none of our actions can properly be denominated religious actions: but this principle, when it is predominant, converts all the common actions of life into religion, or, which is the same thing, into acts of obedience to God.

Love to man for Christ's sake, is a necessary and noble principle of action. It will always produce justice, and lead

to acts of charity. It will happily guard against all those mean dishonest artifices, by which men are continually abusing each other. Persons acting under its influence, will not only be impelled by conscience to succour and relieve their fellow creatures in distress; but, in so doing, will find much happiness of the purest kind.

Carefully observe the operations of your own minds, and attentively consider your inward principles of action. Without this, you will be in much danger of substituting a regard to reputation, in the room of love to God and man. Then you will make a fatal mistake: you will live to yourselves under the notion of living to your maker and fellow creatures; you will worship self, the meanest idol, instead of the God of heaven.

2. What I chiefly aim at is to mention several things, with regard to which professors of christianity too generally fail altogether, or come very far short of their duty; and warn you against these deficiencies. To these things I would call your particular and serious attention.

(1.) Never separate faith and good works, which God has joined together. This is a practical error very prevalent in the christian world. Many who professedly embrace the doctrine of salvation by grace thro' faith, talk much of free grace and religious experiences; but are not careful to maintain good works. On the other hand, many depend chiefly on their moral lives, tho' they have little to boast of, and think faith a matter of small importance. This amounts to the same thing as separating between action and the principle of action: between seeing and the eyes, hearing and the ears, walking and the feet.

The inward genuine exercises of grace and a holy practice ought and always will go together. True christian experiences always will produce a life of obedience. The grace of God which bringeth salvation will teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, &c.

(2.) Take care you do not make the practices of men, no not the practices of good men, the rule of your conduct. So many imperfections attend the best of men in this very imperfect state, that if you follow them, you will be continually in danger of being led astray, in some instances of your conduct. Perhaps it is common for those, who profess to have made the greatest advances in religion, to live in the habitual neglect of some important duties, or to be evidently deficient in some important branches of the christian temper. Never comfort yourselves with the sinful failings or infirmities of persons esteemed eminently pious, and imagine yourselves

pretty good christians tho' guilty of the same failings, or others as bad; or even tho' you fall short of them in some things. Use such helps as you are favoured with, follow others as far as they follow Christ. Let their progress in religion stir up in you a holy emulation: but remember that they are imperfect creatures, and go to the fountain of truth; learn the christian character and rules of conduct, from the word of God; and endeavour to live up to their directions, forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward to those that lie before you. How often do men prove themselves unwise by comparing themselves among themselves!

(3.) If you love your own souls; if you regard the interest, credit and happiness of your families; if you regard the health of your bodies, or the exercise of your reason; if you set any store by peace of conscience, or the hopes of heaven, avoid the common, criminal, detestable practice of drinking ardent spirits. Drinking, not for the health, for to that it seldom conduces; but thro' pride, to conform to custom, or to gratify your appetites.

By criminal indulgence in this vice, indulgence of an artificial appetite foolishly created, thousands of christians have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and millions of men have been guilty of suicide. Not many mad men in Bedlam produce more notorious proofs of insanity, than are furnished by the votaries of this abominable practice—insanity which is voluntary; and therefore exceedingly criminal.

(4.) Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy: not only refrain from common manual labour, but also from vain worldly conversation on that day.

Your temptations to the sin of Sabbath breaking will be numerous, frequent and strong. A disregard to the Sabbath is not only common with abandoned profligates, but also with persons of decent characters, and many who make great pretensions to religion, and are esteemed pious persons. The example of all these, and especially the last mentioned, will produce a strong temptation, to stem which, will require great vigilance and vigorous exertion. This influence of example, I have often felt and found cause to lament. If you conscientiously resist this torrent, you will be reproached as hypocrites, and stigmatized as Sabbath day christians, which will add great force to your temptations.

But temptations, perhaps stronger than these, may come from another quarter. Men with whom you have had some dealings, who may have business with you, and whom you are unwilling to disoblige, may take you aside from the view and hearing of others, and introduce this business: it may be

agreeable to your own interest and inclination to converse upon it. In this case you are strongly tempted to make the authority of God in his law give place to complaisance, inclination and interest; and try to reconcile your consciences to dispensing with the divine law. Or when you meet at the house of God for religious worship, you may see some person from a distance, with whom you have business of considerable importance, by speaking a few words with whom, you may save yourselves or him a good deal of trouble, or expence, or perhaps both. You may feel a strong inclination to do this; and persuade yourselves that it is a work of necessity; and so comply with the temptation. This may be repeatedly the case until you turn the place of worship into a market place, and the house of God into a den of thieves. Carefully distinguish between necessity and convenience; and call nothing a work of necessity, but what the word of God makes so.

When you are attacked by any of these temptations, resist them firmly and perseveringly; but remember your safest method will be to keep out of the way. In order to this, spend a proper proportion of the time in secret meditation, prayer and praise, a suitable portion in family worship and instruction. When you attend a place of publick worship, avoid promiscuous little companies, who spend their time in worldly chat. Either enter into conversation with some pious friend on subjects suitable to the day, retire by yourselves, or go straight into the house of worship, and spend the time before service begins in serious meditations or devout ejaculations. If there are more services than one, observe the same method in the interval. After worship tarry not in the crowd, but go straight home, making the exercises of the day the subject of your meditations.

A christian may find agreeable employment sufficient on the whole of a Sabbath, even when deprived of an opportunity of attending public worship, reading the holy scriptures and other pious practical writings; meditating thereon; secret and family prayer and praise; instructing children and servants, contemplating on the works of creation, providence and redemption; examining into the state of his own soul; trying his conduct by the word of God; visiting the sick and afflicted, when there is occasion; affording such help and consolation, as circumstances may allow. These exercises and employments, which are the proper work of a Sabbath, are, I say, abundantly sufficient for the whole day, and are certainly agreeable to the character of a christian, and calculated for his edification and comfort. How unhappy must be the state of our minds, if silent Sabbaths are a weariness to us,

and we under a kind of necessity to fly to worldly conversation, trifling amusements or neighbourly visits, to wear away the tedious moments, or support us under their weight! How shocking to hear christians arguing against a strictly religious observation of the Sabbath! Surely it ought to be the delight of their souls, and the institution excite their ardent gratitude and praise. If a Sabbath of twenty four hours is a weariness to us, how shall we bear an eternal Sabbath!

(5.) Neglect not family religion, and especially the frequent religious instruction of children and servants (if you have any) in the principles of the christian religion: this is a principal end of the institution of marriage, and one of the most important duties of your life. On the faithful and proper performance of it, depend your own peace of conscience and the interests of civil and religious society.

The neglect of this important duty is perhaps more common in our day and country, than it ever was at any time or in any part of the christian world before; which is a consideration truly alarming; it threatens much damage to the interests of society. Tho' there is scarce any duty more plainly enjoined in scripture, there are but few more entirely neglected by many christian parents. Parents, especially if they are aiming a little at genteel life, are taking considerable pains to give their children a polite education, they are careful to furnish them with decent apparel, food for the nourishment of their bodies, and to restore them to health when sick: but how little pains do they take with them as immortal beings, as candidates for eternal bliss! Their precious souls are neglected, religious instruction is withheld, no proper pains are taken to imbue their minds with piety and true moral virtue.

Let your children, like Timothy, know the holy scriptures from their early days. Do not fall in with the modern notion that children should not read the scriptures, until they come to years of maturity; for if they do not read them until then, they will probably never read them with much attention. They will get their taste so vitiated, and such a relish for productions more agreeable to depraved nature, that they will have but little appetite for the serious instructions of the bible.

Never consent that your child, and especially your daughter, marry an enemy to the christian religion for the sake of family, fortune, or polite education. If you do, you virtually consent that your grand children should be drawn off from the religion of Jesus, and brought up in heathenism: yea worse than heathenism; for infidelity in a christian land is a greater evil than what prevailed among the ancient Heathen, and sets men further from the kingdom of heaven. If you can do

this you are no warm friend to the cause of Christ, or the true interest of posterity. You know who it was that sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. How many christian parents have, in this way, condemned their offspring to Heathen darkness, for the sake of what they call an advantageous match for a daughter. Rather pick up the poorest young man you can find in your country, who has common sense, good morals, and sound religious principles; and prefer him to the most sensible wealthy and genteel infidel in the land.

I do not advise you to use violence with your children, with regard to their marriage; I have seldom observed this to end well; but warn them faithfully of the evil, of the sin and danger of such connexions. If they will persist in spite of every tender and rational method, clear your skirts of the guilt. Never let it be said, never let your conscience say, that you consented to your children's ruin.

(6.) I would say a few things relative to your particular calling and secular interest, and your conduct with respect to these.

Every thing in this world, is so fluctuating, that success in your worldly business is, and ever will be uncertain. You may err in your plans, or those which are best laid, may be frustrated by the hand of providence. That God who governs the affairs of men may see it best to disappoint you, knowing that mediocrity, or even poverty, is better for you than wealth. Endeavour to have your minds prepared for such events. In order to this, never overrate the things of time. Be humble before your Maker: remember that every blessing is forfeited and may justly be denied you, bread and water to nourish your bodies, and even the meanest clothes to cover you. Never think a fine coat or a fine habit essential to your happiness; or that you must be miserable, if you cannot live in an elegant style. Having food and raiment, learn therewith to be content.

Overrating the things of this life and placing much happiness in things of little comparative importance, is the source of much misery. View things in the light of eternity, and make it your business to lay up treasure in heaven, and you never can be poor: seek that honour that cometh from God, and you never will be mean and disgraceful: be clothed in the garments of salvation, and you will not be meanly dressed: feed on the bread of life, and you will never starve: be and conduct like the children of God, and you may humbly rejoice in the most noble parentage.

It is my desire, and for which I endeavour to pray to God, that you may have a competency of the good things of this life: but should I see you growing up very rich, and laying

up large estates for your children, I do not know that it would give me the least satisfaction. I should view you and them, as getting into a situation more unfriendly to piety and virtue, and even the happiness of this life. In a country, more money than is necessary for a circulating medium is hurtful; and so more riches than is necessary to answer the demands of nature and society, to furnish the means of support and comfort, is an injury to the possessor; and when it becomes common, a national disadvantage.

I have often wondered that christian parents should be desirous of leaving large estates to their children, when they must know, if ever they think on the subject, that it commonly proves a real disadvantage to them. How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!

If your worldly circumstances should be urgent, and business call for much of your time and thoughts, do not count this a sufficient excuse for neglecting religious duties in your closets or families; but be so much the more engaged to consecrate a suitable portion of your time to reading, meditation and prayer. By these means endeavour to keep your hearts with all diligence. Perhaps you would find it most convenient and adviseable to go to rest in good time, rise early, and devote a suitable portion of the morning to religious exercises; and, by these means, prepare your minds for entering on the business of the day in the fear of God, and pursuing it with integrity and diligence. Never think the business of your particular calling an excuse for neglecting, or hurrying over the business of your general calling, or forgetting your God, your Saviour, your immortal souls.

Do not divide your time between God and the world; but believe and realize that you are wholly the Lord's. Pursue the common business of life and discharge the several duties thereof, because they are duties you owe to God, yourselves or your fellow creatures: do it in obedience to God, with a view to his glory, and agreeable to the directions of his word. Thus you may serve your God and walk with him all the day long. This is the way to turn every thing into gold.

If you have a multiplicity of business, endeavour to arrange it properly and keep it in as regular order as you can, and thus avoid intricacies and perplexities. These will not only hinder the success of your business; but what is much worse, will draw your thoughts and affections away from God and your duty, and indispose your minds for the one thing needful.

Carefully guard against contracting large debts, which you will find it very difficult to discharge; of disappointing your

creditors, and feigning a number of excuses for failure of payment. This, however common the practice, is real injustice; as truly so as cheating or stealing: and may expose you to vices, you may now think yourselves incapable of committing. We cannot sincerely pray not to be led into temptations, when we are voluntarily running into them. Rather be contented with moderate incomes, and learn to steer near the shore, than expose yourselves to such temptations. When a man makes these bold ventures, there are commonly two vicious dispositions secretly lurking in his heart; immoderate self love, or desire of gain, and a disregard to justice.

Do not indulge a speculating disposition, and be watching for opportunities to take advantage of the necessities or ignorance of your fellow creatures, in order to get their property or money without a reasonable compensation. Never take an unrighteous advantage of another, even when the law will support you in it; for there is imperfection in all human laws and human courts. Always remember there is a court above, in which all these causes will have another hearing, where every error will be rectified, and righteous judgment given and executed.

The vice I am now warning you against, I am afraid is very common, even among those who are called christians; but this does not excuse it, and ought not to reconcile our consciences to it. Dishonesty is not the less so, because it is common, nor because it is practised by men esteemed reputable. These circumstances however may lessen our view of the evil of it, cause it to sit lighter upon our consciences, give force to temptations, and thus increase the danger of your becoming guilty: it ought therefore to put you upon your guard and engage you more firmly to act uprightly.

If providence should smile on your labour and prosper the work of your hands, so that you should increase in wealth, do not so ascribe it to your own wisdom and diligence, as to think your wealth your own in such a sense as to authorize you to lay it out as you please. Remember that it is the gift of God, or the loan of his providence; that you are accountable to him for the use you make of it.

God allows you what is sufficient for your own and family's support; but he does not bestow wealth that you may waste it in vanity and folly. He gives riches for no such trifling purposes; but that you may do good to your fellow creatures, and advance his glory in the world; and thus lay up treasures in heaven. If I may be allowed so to speak, I am afraid the christians of our day and country, will be very poor when they get to heaven: they will find but very little treasure laid up

there. The poor widow with her two mites, will have a better fortune than many of our christian ladies, who are now covered with silks. Many men, who have nothing to give to others but the assistance of their hands, will have better estates than gentlemen, who spend their substance in what they call supporting their rank and station, adorning their families with superfluous ornaments, keeping a sumptuous table, and entertaining their wealthy friends with sumptuous fare, with wines and ardent spirits. See Matt. xxv, 33.

Endeavour to quench an ardent thirst for following the many expensive, capricious, foolish fashions of a gay and thoughtless multitude. By gratifying this thirst many christians, and christian ministers too, greatly dishonour and injure the cause of Christ, and grieve the hearts of their christian brethren.

I do not mean to recommend an affectation of singularity or rusticity; but that plain simplicity, which is most decent in itself, most consistent with the dignity of human nature, and will be most approved by every sensible person. I do not recollect ever to have been acquainted with any person, male or female, who was the more esteemed for being *very fine* or *very fashionable* by the judicious and virtuous of either sex.

Duly consider the great evil of complying with others in follies and levities of conversation and behaviour, contrary to your own reason and the secret whispers of conscience; for this has a direct tendency to harden your hearts and sear your consciences. Sin, though comparatively small, committed against the present remonstrances of conscience, is extremely aggravated, and has a pernicious influence on the heart.

3. Always realize it to be your duty to treat all your fellow creatures with civility, justice, kindness and respect; but when you find a christian, who behaves agreeable to his profession, who is modest, meek, temperate and just, treat him with particular kindness and respect; and that, however poor he may be, of however little estimation in the world, or of whatever denomination: even if a slave, think him not beneath your notice. "An honest man's the noblest work of God:" therefore show more respect to such however, poor or despised, than to rakes, the profane, or dishonest, tho' the latter should abound in wealth, be caressed by their acquaintance, or exalted in their stations.

4. I close this head of advice by affectionately exhorting you to the important duty of self examination. In this, be frequent, solemn and impartial. Know yourselves, and understand the rule of your conduct. Get right ideas of the christian temper and practice, according to the word of God. Consider our strong natural proneness to self deception, and the

direful consequences of mistaking our true state and character. When ever you find things amiss, never rest until you get them rectified. Do not sink into despondency, and give up the work as desperate. When you inquire what is truth on this point, go not away without an answer. Be more engaged to settle accounts between God and your souls, than to settle your books of trade and commerce. When your debts are great, and you have nothing to pay, never rest until they are all blotted out by the blood of Jesus. Should you find your religious profession and conduct inconsistent, never give up with that which is right in order to be consistent, but rectify what is amiss. Neglect not religious ordinances, because your temper and practice disagree with them; but reform your temper and practice. A contrary conduct would appear like a fixed determination to renounce religion, and become consistently wicked. Deceive not yourselves with the notion, that to lay aside religious duties and ordinances is necessary in order to honesty. It must be a very unhappy kind of honesty to be sincerely engaged to forsake God, and live to the world and the flesh. At the same time guard against formality in your devotions, and particularly in your attendance on sealing ordinances. Never be contented without the graces of the Spirit, suitable to the occasion, in actual exercise.

You may think it strange that under this and the former head, I mention so many things which are so common and familiar to you. It is because I esteem them much more important, than things uncommon and curious.

### III. On your conduct as members of civil society.

I have never made politicks much my study, and for many years have studiously avoided meddling with the subject; and therefore on this point I shall say but little.

Ever since the establishment of American independence, and even for some time before, I have very much doubted whether we had political virtue sufficient to support our happy, free, republican government. Our relation to Europe, and intercourse with nations far advanced in the vices usually produced by opulence, had begun to contaminate our morals, and destroy that honesty and simplicity of manners, which are necessary in free states, especially in their infancy. I am now pretty thoroughly convinced that we have not a sufficiency of virtue. I expect that you, or at least your children, will live to see a miserable reverse of affairs.

This persuasion does not arise from want of wisdom or faithfulness in the present officers of the general or particular governments, which have come to my knowledge, or which I have reason to suspect; but from our not having that degree

of virtue in the mass of the people, which is necessary and sufficient for the preservation and support of our independence and happiness. I think it morally impossible that we should long continue free and happy, without a reformation in our principles and manners; and know of nothing that can produce this reformation but religion; religion to influence the mind, and give it a happy direction.

Perhaps the first attempt to govern a nation without religion was made in France: and, judging by the event, we have no reason to admire the plan.

If I understand the signs of the times, we are ripening fast for political ruin. In our state, the lowest and meanest kind of bribery has destroyed the political virtue of the people: they have lost all sense of the importance of the right of suffrage. As the body of the people is, so is or will be, the representative body. These things I mention as an introduction to a few words of advice.

1. Always treat the officers of the government under which you live with respect. Never credit any report raised against them, without the fullest evidence of their guilt: especially the newspaper squibs of candidates for places. Their puffing and swelling, treat with the contempt due to the frog in the fable.

Endeavour to live peaceable lives, and be as useful as you can in private stations. In order to this, speak evil of no man or woman in private or publick stations, except when duty calls you to it. By proper government in this respect, much will be prevented. You should especially refrain from this vice, when you think yourselves injured, or are in a passion.

2. Meddle but little in political matters, unless you have a better opportunity for usefulness than seems now to present itself. Should any of you have a call to act in a publick capacity, be moderate in your thinking, speaking and acting in state affairs. Never be a fire-hot republican, nor a fire-hot federalist. As truth ordinarily lies between two extremes, there you are to seek it.

3. Even if you have talents, and a door should open for your executing any civil office, I cannot recommend it; because a man cannot act agreeable to the tenor of his oath, without rendering himself the butt of envy or malice. A justice of the peace, for instance, is bound to be guilty of perjury on the penalty of incurring the displeasure of his fellow citizens, and exposing himself to their malicious efforts to destroy his reputation and influence. I am very much mistaken if many of our justices are not extremely ignorant of their duty, or guilty of unfaithfulness.

The horrid impiety and profanity of modern armies should incline every good man to avoid them, as far as he can consistent with his duty to his country. It is to be feared they are Seminaries of vice and infidelity. Tho' it is true a military office is esteemed very honourable; the art of killing, and a commission to exercise it, highly raises a man's reputation; yet, in truth, the commanders of armies are very commonly nothing better than the servile tools of avarice and ambition. The high encomiums passed on great generals by historians and poets, have a vast and unhappy influence in corrupting the minds and morals of mankind, and especially of youth who read such compositions with much avidity. To learn in early life to admire bad characters is a very unhappy thing.

4. Should you be competently qualified for it, and have a probable prospect of success in an attempt to represent a portion of the people in the legislature, never make the attempt, unless you can do it without descending to those truly vicious and mean arts, which are too commonly practised in this state, and perhaps some others: I mean those of defaming your rivals, boasting of your own intentions or abilities, soliciting of votes, or interest, or meanly bribing the people by spiritous liquors. These practices are very pernicious, and mean to the lowest degree. It would be a disgrace to you, or any man, to carry an election by such arts as those. A house of representatives, elected by such means are a disgrace to the country they represent. Such may imagine they have the honour of representing their county, and think they are serving their country; but they are greatly mistaken. The truth is they are not serving, but corrupting and ruining the people. The means they use to obtain their election do more injury, by corrupting the morals and political principles of men, than all their services in the legislature do good.

If you have talents for usefulness and influence in the state, or county, or neighbourhood where you live, consider them as sacred to the service of piety and virtue. If you do or shall possess wealth, and this should give you influence, consider it as a talent committed to you to improve to the honour of God and the good of your fellow men; and not as the means of raising you to the pinnacle of earthly honour. For these purposes you were created, and all your possessions should be devoted. In this way you should be rich in good works, rich towards God, and lay up treasure in heaven. This you are to consider as the one thing needful, and make the principal object of your serious attention and earnest pursuit.

The third head of advice concerns chiefly the males: women have but little to do with politicks. Their sphere of action is

more limited; but yet very important. A woman at home, diligently and prudently discharging the duties of her station, promoting industry and economy, training up children in piety and virtue, serves her country better, and merits more esteem than a blustering politician. Therefore

My dear daughters, let me affectionately advise you to consider the importance of your station, and make yourselves well acquainted with it's duties, what they are and how to be performed. Here you will find sufficient scope for all the abilities you possess.

Labour to cure yourselves and your children of those little vanities, as they are called, which are natural to the human race in it's present degenerate state; and perhaps more so in your sex than the other. This vanity is a regard to decency and a desire of pleasing, degenerated into a vice. The principle must not be eradicated; but it is to be reformed and rightly directed.

For want of proper care in parents, and particularly in mothers, the lives of many young women, especially the daughters of parents in affluent circumstances, are a constant rotation of vanity and folly, which unfits them more and more for every important duty of this life, and indisposes them for all the serious and more important business of the life to come. If they are good humoured and do not suffer themselves to be ruined by some vile rake, they are called innocent good sort of girls: but in reality they spend their time and waste their lives, in a very criminal way: they are daily contracting great guilt. This will appear to be an undoubted fact, if we only allow, that they are bound to remember their creator in the days of their youth, to love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and seek salvation as the principal business of their lives. I say, *a constant rotation*; for when they return from one circle of folly, their chief business at home is to prepare for another. It is your business to point out to them the evil and danger of such a course of life, and impress their minds with some of the most important ends, for which they were designed; to train them up for what is more worthy of a rational creature and candidate for eternity, teaching them the worth of their precious souls and importance of redeeming grace.

Begin with your sons in time, before their natural pride and obstinacy gain strength, and they imagine themselves above the instructions and reproofs of a mother. Endeavour to instil into their minds a reverence for the Deity, and love to his ways. Remember that though you should be unsuccessful at present, the principles you may now inculcate may be

revived in their minds, and set home upon their hearts, when you are resting in your graves.

Teach your daughters to despise the character of a vain fop, and especially a vile debauchee. Whatever pretensions a man may make to love, and however ardent his passion, if he attempts the chastity of the object of his affections, he gives the most unequivocal proof of his want of genuine love. Love is a chaste passion, which would by no means injure its object.

Perhaps if mothers had given timely instructions on this head, it might have prevented the ruin of many daughters. Young women should be taught to treat young men of bad characters with an indifference that they will feel if they have any sense: and on some occasions with a contempt, they will sensibly feel. This is a duty they owe to themselves and to society. Nothing in the power of young women, is so well calculated to reform from the vice I have in my eye, or to prevent its spread and prevalence.

Much has been said about the education of daughters, and attempts made to teach them grammar, geography, philosophy, &c: in some instances these may properly make a part of their education; but should never make the principal part. In general it is of more importance in the education of girls, to teach them how to manage the business of the kitchen, the parlour, the nursery and the dairy, the duties of subjection and obedience to parents, and other superiors, and of respect and kindness to all. They should be also, and especially, taught to reverence their maker, seek his favour, thank him for his mercies and submit to his government.

As far as you have ability and shall find occasion, ever be ready, especially among your own sex, to bear an honourable testimony in favour of virtue and religion. Never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ: it is the wisdom of God and the power of God. I do not mean that you should be fond of displaying your talents in religious disputation: but that you show yourselves above the frowns or sneers of impiety and infidelity. These, should they prevail to a certain degree, would be the ruin of your sex and destruction of human nature.

If you should suffer reproach for your attachment to the cause of religion, submit to it with cheerfulness; and let it rather strengthen than lessen your attachment. Always prefer men of real piety: they are your best friends, and the best friends of human nature.

If any of you should be so unhappy as to have husbands, who neglect family worship, and the religious education of your children, I know this will greatly distress you, unless you are sinfully careless about these things yourselves: but

let it not sink you into neglect of your duty; but rather stir you up to more diligence and faithfulness.

If you cannot have social worship, in your parlour or your chamber, have it in your closet. Enter into your closet, take your dear little fatherless children with you, spread your own case and their's before the Lord; humbly invoke his name, and earnestly implore his grace and blessing on yourselves, your families, the church of God and on all mankind. Thus teach your children to reverence the God of their fathers, and seek the great salvation.

Now my dear children, with my whole heart I would commit you to God. May every needed temporal blessing, and all the riches of his grace rest upon you. This is the earnest desire and prayer of your

Affectionate Father,

DAVID RICE.

A NARRATIVE OF THE STATE OF RELIGION,

*Within the bounds of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; and of the General Associations of Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts Proper, during the last year.*

THE Church of God, that has been bought with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the most interesting community on earth. With its prosperity and happiness, the Triune Jehovah has identified his own honour and glory. A community, so dear to God, and so intimately connected with the highest interests of our fellow men, cannot fail to command the best wishes and the fervent prayers of all who feel a genuine friendship to the Saviour. 'Tis, therefore, that the General Assembly, confident that the churches under our care feel a deep interest in the cause of Zion, would communicate to them a summary view of the state of religion within our bounds, and of the churches in connection with us, as shewn from the reports presented by the several Presbyteries, and those of the General Associations of Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

We have, perhaps, never, Dear Brethren, been called to address you, when we had fewer causes of mourning and grief than at present. But whilst, to a very pleasing extent, believers honor their profession by a godly conversation, and

sinners pay a decent respect to the external institutions of religion; yet, there are many things to deplore.

That which most tenderly affects our hearts, with respect to those, who have publicly professed themselves attached to the Divine Saviour, is coldness and formality in their religious duties; and too much of a disposition to conform to the fashionable customs and amusements of that portion of the community who know not God, and have no love in their hearts towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Such professors seem to have forgotten that their Divine Master has distinguished his people, by calling them the "salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." A recurrence to the season when first they espoused the cause of the Saviour, and a recollection of the feelings that then agitated their bosoms, the love that inspired their hearts, will happily serve to arouse them to more vigorous action, to increase the ardour of their devotion, and to make them feel a more deep and affecting concern, for the spiritual and eternal well being of their fellowmen. We would most tenderly exhort those, to whom this reproach can, in any measure attach itself, to remember their first love, and to return to it; to recollect with what emotions, on the day of their espousal, they gave their whole soul to the Saviour; and how they exhorted others to come, and taste his grace and feel his goodness.

In addition to the cause of humiliation to which we have alluded, we are under the painful necessity of observing, that those gross vices, which have so long been the curse of society, and the disgrace of the human character, still exist, and are practised in many portions of our country. The excessive use of ardent spirits, in many places, is yet to be deplored; as well as the profanation of the Name and the Sabbath of the Lord. We would however observe with sentiments of the most profound gratitude to God, that the presumptuous and wanton habit of profane swearing is, to a very happy extent, abandoned by almost all classes of the community, who have any true respect for themselves. In some places there are also those, who waste their health and dissipate their property, and put to hazard the happiest and dearest comforts of their families and friends, by devoting themselves to the demoralizing and iniquitous practice of gambling.

Infidelity, as formerly professed in our country, can scarcely be said to exist. The Arch Deceiver of our fellowmen operates *now* by more specious means: He leads men to substitute the *name* of religion for religion *itself*; and would make them contented with the external habiliments of virtue, with a kind of formal religion, not legitimately founded on a knowledge

of the grand and sublime doctrines of the Gospel, whilst they are destitute of the power of vital Godliness. Affecting liberality of sentiment—enlarged views—expansive feelings of benevolence—and such ideas of the nature and perfections of God, as would seem to imply, that sin is rather an infirmity than a crime; whilst their hearts are bitterly at enmity with the soul humbling and self denying system of the Gospel, “With names of virtue they deceive,” “and cheat the soul to death.” Insidiously pursuing their designs, they court the darkness and plot against the truth; yet it affords matter of congratulation, that it is the promise of Jehovah, when “the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord” in due time, “shall lift up a standard against him.”

We have the happiness to live in a day, Brethren, when the Captain of our Salvation in a distinguishing manner, is marshalling his *mighty host*, and preparing for the moral conquest of the *world*. The grand contest that has been so long conducting, is drawing rapidly towards a termination, that shall be infinitely honorable, both to our Glorious leader, and to those who have fought under his banner. Not a finger shall be lifted, nor shall a devout aspiration heave the bosom of a single son, or daughter of man, to contribute to the advancement, or plead for the glory of the kingdom of the Messiah, that shall not be met with the smiles, and crowned with the blessing of God. This remark is justified by the interesting facts that have been presented to the General Assembly, in the details of the several Presbyteries. No design has been formed, in any part of our bounds, to advance the kingdom of Christ, to extend the knowledge of God, and to promote the best interest of men, that has not been succeeded with the Divine blessing. The prayers of God's people are scarcely uttered, before they are answered, and an effort is scarcely made, before it is successful. The experience, which our churches have thus had, of the goodness of God, should stimulate to continued faithfulness and exertion. The rising glory of our Zion cannot fail to command our attention, and inspire our hearts with gratitude.

But to what are we to attribute, under God, this happy state of things? this animating prospect? To the faithfulness of Ministers in preaching the Gospel, the fervency of their prayers, and the constancy of their labours to promote the highest good of their beloved people—To the fidelity, and zeal, and charitable exertions, of the professed friends of Christ, exhibited in the numerous institutions of Christian philanthropy and benevolence, that have been organized in all parts of the United States—And to that spirit of christian

liberality with which God has been pleased to inspire men of talents and wealth and influence among us, to give of their property, and throw the weight of their character into the scale of truth, thus advancing the benign system of the Gospel, which is so happily calculated to meliorate the moral condition of man, and to qualify him for usefulness here, and glory hereafter.

It is with peculiar pleasure, that we would inform our dear brethren, in different parts of the church, that the Ministers of Christ are labouring, with increasing diligence and success, in the common Vineyard of our Master; and that a very happy spirit of forbearance, tenderness, and harmony, generally prevails. That where the grand and distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, have been most clearly exhibited, they have been attended more or less with the divine blessing. These doctrines have been—The absolute sovereignty of God, in the controul, and final issue, of every event, both in the natural and moral universe—The total moral depravity of the human heart—Salvation, by the free and sovereign grace of God, exhibited through the infinite righteousness and sacrifices of his Son—And the free and unbounded offer of mercy, to *every* guilty descendant of Adam, by which the judgment of God in the destruction of the finally impenitent is vindicated, and their misery and their ruin are chargeable, upon their own *unwillingness* to accept of the merciful *provision* made in the Gospel. These truths have been accompanied with the divine blessing, and the spirit of God has graciously visited many of our Churches and Congregations, with his renewing and consoling influences, gladdening the hearts of the friends of the Redeemer, and putting a song of praise into the mouth of those who before were strangers and enemies.

It cannot fail to cheer the heart of every friend to religion and morals, that without an exception, the reports of the several Presbyteries, represent the cause of evangelical truth, as attended with a gradual, but uniform success. On almost every section of our Church has God been pleased to bestow some refreshing showers of grace. And although it does not appear, that he has, in any instance, displayed such wonders of mercy, as in some former years; yet, we cannot but indulge the fond hope, that during the past year, the accessions to the Church, have, on the whole, been about as numerous as at any former period. The great and permanent interests of religion, have undoubtedly, during the last year, been more extensively secured and promoted than heretofore. But our Heavenly Father has not suffered a whole year to pass over

us, without imparting to us some rich tokens of his tender regard, by extending to some of our Churches the *special* influences of the Holy Spirit. The congregations of Bloomfield, Pennfield, and Risa, of the Presbytery of Ontario—Prattsburg, of the Presbytery of Bath—Ulysses, of the Presbytery of Geneva—Bridgwater, Vernon, and Verona, of the Presbytery of Oneida—De Kalb, Russel, Blacklake, Stockholm, and Hopkinton of the Presbytery of Champlain—Rallston, in the Presbytery of Albany—and Aurora, of the Presbytery of Cayuga, have all of them been visited with more or less of the *special* influences of the Divine Spirit. In the Middle, Southern, and Western sections of our Church, we notice as places that have been *specially* visited, Westfield, Jersey City, North Hardiston, Newfoundland, Stoney Brook, and Long Pond, in the Presbytery of Jersey—Columbia, in the Presbytery of New Castle—York and Chester, in the Presbytery of Concord—Huron, Florence, Bath and Atwater, in the Presbytery of Portage—Waterford, in the Presbytery of Erie—several congregations in the Presbytery of Union—and Braceville, Sharon, and Geneva, in the Presbytery of Grand river. In Percipeny, in Jersey Presbytery, and in several congregations in the Presbytery of West Lexington, have been gathered to a very pleasing extent, the fruits of past revivals.

In the vicinity of Portage Presbytery, are settled the Mohawk and Wyandot Indians, on Sandusky river, who have been visited by a member of that Presbytery, for the purpose of enquiring into their present moral state and condition, and ascertaining their views and feelings with respect to christianity. The result of this enquiry was highly gratifying, inasmuch as the former appeared willing to have schools established among them, and both were extremely anxious to be made acquainted with the Gospel. Several among them were supposed to have become the hopeful subjects of a change of heart.

In further calling your attention to the prosperity which attends the beloved Zion of our God, we cannot but notice as a special subject of gratitude to our exalted King, the great extent, to which he is pleased to employ, as the instruments of promoting moral and religious improvement among our vast population, by instructing the rising generation, and delivering from degradation, and poverty and ruin, the bereaved widow, and the helpless orphan, the pious and benevolent females throughout our bounds. By them were our Sabbath schools first fostered and brought into notice, which have now become such powerful engines for the suppression of vice; and in which are so extensively taught, to those who

would have otherwise grown up in ignorance and unrestrained sin, the first principles of that religion, whose motto is, "PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD WILL TO MEN," and whose reward is, the eternal blessedness of Heaven.

The Assembly are happy to learn that Sabbath Schools have been formed, in unusual numbers, and with high promises of extensive usefulness, in almost all the Presbyteries within our bounds; and would earnestly recommend the organization of them in all parts of the United States. We advert with much satisfaction, to the schools of this kind established in the cities of New York and Philadelphia, in the former of which, from eight to ten thousand, and in the latter, and its vicinity, from twelve to fourteen thousand children are instructed on every Lord's day. To these schools, together with the catechetical instruction of the children of the church, which has heretofore been recommended by the Assembly, and is now to a considerable extent practised throughout our bounds, are we to look as the nurseries, where those plants are growing, that shall in future beautify and enrich the flourishing vineyard of our Lord.

As intimately connected with the subject of catechetical instruction, we would recommend to your particular regard, the formation of Bible classes, in all our congregations. We are happy to learn, that in many parts of our church such classes have already been formed, and that they have almost uniformly been attended with the blessing of God. It is an encouraging fact on this subject, that many who have united with our church during the last year, acknowledge themselves to have derived their first religious impressions, from the instructions received in their Bible classes.

The Assembly were gratified in being informed that attention is paid to the religious instruction of coloured people in Sabbath schools, conducted by our young people of both sexes; and that this attention to that unhappy portion of our race, is not confined to the eastern and middle states, but extends to several of the southern states. In this good work, it is hoped that those who have already engaged, will persevere, and that many more, being sensible of the debt of justice we owe to that class of our fellow creatures, will endeavour, by imparting to them moral and religious instruction, to rescue them from that state of ignorance and vice, to which they have been so long reduced.

The Assembly would farther inform the churches, that the African school intended to qualify young persons of colour for the Gospel Ministry, which is under the direction of the Synod of New York and New Jersey, will probably become

more extended in its operations by the aid of several more Synods, which it is presumed will unite with the Synod of New York and New Jersey, in this benevolent work.

The Assembly are also gratified in being able to inform the churches, that the Missionary cause is prosecuted with growing zeal, and that the great head of the church has been pleased to bestow his blessing on the labours of the Missionaries during the last year. Encouraged by the success which has attended their exertions, in this most interesting concern, we hope that the churches which are blessed with the stated means of grace, will continue to show their sympathy for the destitute, by an increasing liberality in contributing for the support of missionaries.

In addition to all this, we notice with peculiar pleasure, the increase of many associations, the almost universal observance of the monthly concert of prayer, and the formation of Education and Missionary societies, throughout all our bounds.

From the best information we could obtain on this subject, we learn that there are probably three hundred young men, supported by the funds of the several Education societies in the United States, in different stages of preparation for the Gospel ministry.

The Missionary Associations of young men throughout our bounds, have commanded the attention, and awakened the gratitude of the General Assembly. Our Missionary field is extremely extensive, and its state of moral culture very low. We would mention, as furnishing important stations of Missionary labour, and that they may be before the eye of the public, the Presbyteries of Niagara, Columbia, Champlain, St. Lawrence, Lancaster, Erie, Hanover, Winchester, Portage, Lexington, Union, and Mississippi. The last mentioned Presbytery includes the whole of the states of Mississippi and Louisiana; and among the vast population that is spread over this immense territory, there are but ten organized Presbyterian congregations, and seven ministers of our denomination. Our hearts were tenderly affected, when the Commissioner from that Presbytery, after having described the forlorn and hapless state of that region closed his narrative by saying, "Brethren, we solicit your sympathies, your prayers, and your assistance."

The Mission established by the American Board of Commissioners, for Foreign Missions among the Cherokee and Choctaw tribes of Indians, is attended with very flattering

success, and there appears to be among them generally, a more than common willingness to receive instruction, and hear the Gospel.

The several moral societies that have been formed, are producing salutary effects in restraining vice. We notice with special satisfaction, the Moral Society of the state of New Jersey, which, from the weight of talent and influence combined in it, cannot fail to produce the happiest results.

The Assembly feel themselves under peculiar obligations to bless God, that he continues to visit in great mercy, our seminaries of learning. From these fountains of science, by the blessings of the Highest on the young men who are preparing for future activity and usefulness, in the church and state, are issuing streams that are continually gladdening the city of our God.

And we have particular pleasure in speaking of the distinguished smiles of the great head of the church, upon the Theological Seminary at Princeton, under the care of the Assembly.—There have been sixty-seven students trained in this Institution during the past year. Of these fifty-six still remain.

It would be an act of injustice to their pious generosity, to withhold from the knowledge of the Church the fact, that twenty-eight students have, through the past year, been supported at the Seminary, chiefly by the Cent Societies under the patronage of our benevolent females—May they abundantly experience the sweetest of all rewards, the realizing of their prayers and their charities, in seeing the Heralds of the Cross multiply, until the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and the earth shall be filled with the glory of God.

By the delegate from Massachusetts, it is put into our power to state, that the Theological Seminary at Andover, is in prosperous circumstances, and that about one hundred young men are preparing in that institution for the Gospel Ministry.

We hear with pleasure also of the flourishing situation of the Institution for the instruction of the Deaf and Dumb at Hartford in Connecticut; and that a similar Institution has been established in the city of New York, under the very liberal patronage of the State Legislature.

From the delegates from Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, we derive the pleasing intelligence that God is carrying on his work in these States with power and success. From fifteen hundred to two thousand persons are supposed to have been the hopeful subjects of special divine influence during the last year, in the counties of Hampshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Worcester, in Massachusetts. In

Dartmouth College fifty out of one hundred students are hopefully pious, and are prosecuting their studies with a view to the Gospel Ministry. Surely, it affords matter of great encouragement to the ministers of Christ, and should excite them to increased fidelity and zeal, that the Great Head of the Church has been pleased to crown the faithful and evangelical labours and teaching of our eastern brethren, with such abundant and glorious success.

Brethren, the Lord is on his way—We hope that the day of **MILLENIAL BLESSEDNESS** begins to break upon the **EASTERN MOUNTAINS**—Soon shall it burst with **SPLENDOUR** upon our **WORLD**—Let us see to it, that we stand in our place and fill up our day with usefulness and duty—that being “**FAITHFUL UNTO THE DEATH WE MAY RECEIVE AT LAST A CROWN OF LIFE.**”

Published by order of the General Assembly,  
Attest, **WILLIAM NEIL**, Stated Clerk.  
*Philadelphia, May 26, 1819.*

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## REVIEW.

*Theology; explained and defended, in a series of Sermons. By Timothy Dwight, S. T. D. L. L. D. Late President of Yale College. With a memoir of the life of the author. In five volumes 8vo. Middletown Conn. Clarke and Lyman. 1818-19.*

IN reviewing the first volume of this work, we believe we made something like a promise to resume the subject another time. The whole is now before us, and we sit down to perform our engagement, with great pleasure. Indeed we know not in what way we can provide more substantially for our readers, than by giving them some idea, and a few specimens of this great work, certainly among the first of the age in which we live. At the same time, we must observe in justice to ourselves as well as the author, that we do not pretend to give a complete analysis of the system; but only a brief notice of some points that strike us in reading along.

In the beginning of the second volume, our author considers the source of human depravity, and maintains, that “*in consequence of the apostacy of Adam, all men have sinned.*” He afterwards more particularly explains his idea to be, “*that by means of the offence or transgression of Adam, the judgment,*

or sentence of God, came upon all men unto condemnation; *because, and solely because, all men, in that state of things which was constituted in consequence of the transgression of Adam, became sinners,* (p. 5.) Now, we must say, this round-about phraseology is not exactly to our mind: indeed it seems contrived on purpose to exclude the idea of imputed sin, as held by our best standards and divines. And accordingly, our author tells us, that he does not intend to teach that the posterity of Adam are guilty of his transgression." "Moral actions says he, are not, so far as I can see, transferable from one being to another. The personal act of any agent is, in its very nature, the act of that agent solely; and and incapable of being participated by any other agent. Of course, the guilt of such a personal act is equally incapable of being transferred or participated. The guilt is inherent in the action; and is attributable therefore to the agent only." (p. 3.) But what does our author mean? Does he merely mean, that, as we have not actually eaten the forbidden fruit, we are not *personally* guilty of Adam's transgression? This is certainly very true; but who says that we are? We only say, that his transgression is *imputed* to us; (of course admitting that it is not *personal*,) and so say the scriptures. Thus we read, "*by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*" And again, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But we are made alive in Christ, not by our own personal holiness, (though we have the seed of that too,) but by his righteousness imputed. Of course we die in Adam in the same way, that is, not merely by our personal guilt; but by his transgression imputed. And indeed, our author himself, if we understand him, admits that the scriptures speak of Adam's transgression as imputed to his descendents; but yet denies that we are implicated in its guilt. But really this is a distinction too nice for our faculties to discern; nor can we see the force of his remarks about it. He tells us, to be sure, that *λογίζουαι* the Greek word which we translate *impute*, "denotes originally and always, *to reckon, to count, to reckon to the account of a man, to charge to his account*"—and we accept the explanation—but he adds, "never to transfer moral action, guilt, or desert from one being to another." (p. 3.) But if we are taught, that the "moral action" of Adam is "charged to the account" of his posterity, and that action was guilty, does it not follow inevitably that the guilt is inherent in the action," and is therefore imputed along with it. And are we not in fact dealt with in the word and providence of God, to all intents and purposes, precisely as if we had individually eaten the forbidden fruit,

in our own proper persons. Are we not *by nature the children of wrath*, and under the curse of the law, exactly as Adam was after his transgression? Are we not exposed to suffering, death, and eternal punishment, without any hope but in Christ, just as he was by his fall? And is not his "moral action" then, his transgression, and its essential guilt, most clearly charged to our account? It is true, you may say, this doctrine of imputation is *hard to be understood*; but we must not *wrest the scriptures* for all. Our author himself observes well, that the truth of a doctrine cannot be affected "by any inexplicableness, arising from the efficient cause, the moral nature or the consequences of the fact." (p. 12.) Nor is the difficulty lessened; but, as we think, rather increased by his view of the doctrine; and he frankly owns that he cannot explain it. The truth is, we must all admit, there are depths in this subject which we cannot fathom; and it only remains for us to follow those lights of heaven, that are hung out from above to guide us on our way.

In the next sermon our author winds up his discourses on the subject of human depravity, with some general remarks, by way of improvement. And here he takes a wide range indeed, and gives us some of those large views that shew the reach of his mind. We quote a single passage as a specimen in point. He is observing, that "the fundamental principle of moral and political science, so far as man is concerned, is his depravity," and proceeds:

"It will not be questioned, that virtuous and depraved beings differ from each other radically; nor that the science of the one must, of course, differ in its fundamental principles from the science of the other. A philosopher might, if possessed of competent knowledge, describe exactly the character of an angel, and yet scarcely say any thing, except what pertains to a moral being as such, which would be at all applicable to the character of man. A book displaying the whole nature and conduct of our first parents, in paradise, would contain scarcely any thing descriptive of their apostate descendants. But all science of this nature is founded in facts; and is formed of facts, and the relations which spring from them. The first great fact in the science of man is, that he is a depraved being. *This is the first and fundamental fact*, because out of it arise, and by it are characterized, all his volitions, and all his conduct. Hence every thing pertaining to man, is coloured, and qualified, by this part of his moral nature; and no description of him can be true, and no doctrine sound, or defensible, into which this consideration does not essentially enter. Equally true is it, that no system

of regulations can be practically suited to him, or fitted to control his conduct with success, or efficacy, which is not founded on the same principle.

“From these observations it is evident, that much of what is published, and received, as moral and political science, is only *science falsely so called*. It considers man as originally a virtuous being; accidentally, and in some small degree, warped from the path of rectitude, and always ready to return to it again; deceived, and abused, by insidious and peculiarly corrupted individuals; but, left to himself, designing nothing beside what is good, and uttering nothing but what is true. This indeed is a character *devoutly to be wished*; but the picture is without an original; in the language of painters, a mere fancy-piece:” and it would be as easy to find the human character in a gryphon of Ariosto, or the sylphs, gnomes, and nymphs of Rosicrucius, as in a library filled with this species of philosophy.

“Were these systems to terminate in *speculation only*, their authors might be permitted to dream on without disturbance. But unhappily their doctrines *are made the foundation and directory of personal conduct, and public administration*: Rules of private life, municipal laws, and other governmental regulations, are drawn from these pleasing, but merely hypothetical doctrines; and are intended, and expected, actually to control men, and their affairs, so as to effectuate good order, peace, and prosperity. Here the influence of systems which proceed according to this scheme, becomes eminently dangerous, malignant, and fatal. All the measures, founded on them, are fitted for the inhabitants of some other planet, or the natives of fairy land, or the forms which haunt the dreams of a dis-tempered fancy, with an incomparably better adaptation than for men. Of course, they can never become practical, or useful, to such beings as really exist in this world, impatient ever of necessary restraints, selfish, covetous, proud, envious, wrathful, revengeful, lewd, forgetful of God, and hostile to each other. Open your eyes on the beings around you; cast them back on the annals of history; turn them inward upon yourselves; and you will find ample and overwhelming proof of the truth of these observations.

“On this fundamental folly were formed all those vain, empty, miserable systems of policy, which, in a portentous succession, deluged republican France in misery and ruin. In the treatises, laws, and measures, brought into being in that nation, during its late wonderful struggle to become free, the people were uniformly declared to be good, honest, virtuous, influenced only by the purest motives, and aiming only at the

best ends. These very people, at the same time, were employed in little else except unceasing plunder, uniform treachery, the violation of all laws, the utterance of all falshood, the murder of their king, nobles, and clergy, and the boundless butchery of each other. In a state of immorality, in a prostration of all principle, at which even this sinful world stood aghast, this despicable flattery was continually reiterated, and the miserable objects of it very naturally concluded, that, as they were praised *while* they were doing these things, they were praised *for* doing them. Of course they were fixed in this conduct beyond recal. Every malignant passion was let loose, the reins were thrown upon the neck of every sordid appetite; the people became a collection of wild beasts, and the country a den of ravage and slaughter. In this situation nothing could restrain them but force. The wretches who by their songs and incantations had called up the fiends of mischief, could not lay them; but became, in an enormous and horrid succession, victims of their own spells; and were offered up, by hundreds, to the sanguinary Moloch, which they had so absurdly and wickedly idolized.

“Sound and true policy will always consider Man as he is; and treat him accordingly. Its measures will be universally calculated for depraved beings; and it will, therefore, never hesitate to establish every necessary restraint. Whatever is good in man it will regard as the result of wise, careful, efficacious discipline, realized and blessed by God. Such discipline, therefore, it will regularly establish, protect, and encourage. Honest, well-disposed, and orderly citizens, it will protect; the violation of private rights, and the disturbers of public peace, it will punish. Nor will its restraints and punishments stop, until they have gained in some good measure their end.”—p. 28—30.

Upon the great subject of the Divinity of Christ, our author's discourses are able indeed. He sets out with observing, very properly, that the whole enquiry concerning the character of the Messiah, “is a subject of mere revelation.” The question then, is Christ God, is a question about a record, which can only be tried by inspection. He, accordingly, proceeds to search the Scriptures, and soon presents us with an ample collection of authorities, which clearly prove the affirmative. His expositions of the various texts he chooses to cite, are often happy in the highest degree. His answers too, to the objections of Socinians, and his objections to their scheme, are fairly beyond reply. At the same time, we admire the spirit of christian candour which shines through all his arguments against them. He brings no *railing accu-*

sations, and says nothing which he does not prove. Even his remarks upon the unfairness of their controversial management, have only the natural severity of their truth. We recommend this part of the work to particular attention, just quoting a single passage, which seems to give the essence of the subject. He is answering the stale objection, that, "the doctrine of the Trinity, or of three persons in one God, is self-contradictory," and justly maintains, that the doctrine "does not involve the existence of three infinite beings; and therefore the objection does not affect it."

"The scriptural account of Jehovah, as received by every Trinitarian, is, that *He is one perfect existence, underived and unlimited; and that this one perfect Existence is in the Scriptures declared to be, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* These, in the usual language of Trinitarians, are styled *Persons*, because, in the Scriptures, the three personal pronouns, *I, Thou, and He*, are on every proper occasion applied to them. As this is done by the Father and the Son, speaking to each other, and of the Holy Ghost; and by the Holy Ghost, speaking of the Father and of the Son; we are perfectly assured, that this language is in the strictest sense proper. Still, no Trinitarian supposes, that the word, *Person*, conveys an adequate idea of the thing here intended:—much less that, when it is applied to God, it denotes the same thing, as when applied to created beings. As the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are distinguished; some term, generally expressing this distinction, seems necessary, to those, who would mark it, when speaking of the Three together. This term, therefore, warranted in the manner above mentioned, has been chosen by *Trinitarians*, as answering this purpose, so far as it can be answered by human language.

If I am asked, as I probably shall be, what is the exact meaning of the word *Person* in this case; I answer, that I do not know. Here the Unitarian usually triumphs over his antagonist. But the triumph is without foundation, or reason. If I ask in return, "What is the human Soul?" or "the human Body?" He is obliged to answer, that *he* does not know. If he says, that the soul is Organized Matter, endowed with the powers of thinking and acting. I ask again, what is that Organization? and, What is that Matter? To these questions he is utterly unable to furnish any answer.

Should he ask again, to what purpose is the admission of the term, if its signification is unknown? I answer; To what purpose is the admission of the word *Matter*, if its signification is unknown? I further answer, that the term in dispute serves to convey, briefly and conveniently, the things intended

by the doctrine; viz. that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; that these are Three in one sense, and One in another. The sense, in which they are three, and yet one, we do not, and cannot, understand. Still we understand the fact; and on this fact depends the truth, and meaning, of the whole Scriptural system. If Christ be God, he is also a Saviour; if not, there is no intelligible sense, in which he can sustain this title, or the character, which it denotes.

In addition to this, He is asserted in the Scriptures to be God, in every form of expression, and implication, from the beginning to the end, as plainly as language can admit; and so fully, and variously, that, if we deny these assertions their proper force, by denying that he is God, we must, by the same mode of construction, deny any thing, and every thing, which the Scriptures contain. If the declarations, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and Christ who is over all things, God, blessed for ever;* do not prove Christ to be God; the declaration, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,* does not prove, that there was a Creation, or that the Creator is God. The declaration, *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which is made,* is as full a proof, that Christ is the Creator, as *that,* just quoted from Genesis is, that the Creator is God. An admission, or denial, of the one ought, therefore, if we would treat the several parts of the Bible alike, and preserve any consistency of construction, to be accompanied by a similar admission, or denial, of the other. Here, then, is a reason for acknowledging Christ to be God, of the highest kind, viz. *that God has declared this truth in the most explicit manner.*

The *Mysteriousness* of the truth, thus declared, furnishes not even a shadow of Reason for either denial, or doubt. That God can be One in one sense, and Three in another, is unquestionable. Whatever that sense is, if the declaration be true; and one, which God has thought it proper to make in the Scriptures; and one, therefore, to which he has required our belief; it is, of course, a declaration, incalculably important to mankind, and *worthy of all acceptance.*

The futility and emptiness of this fundamental objection of Unitarians, as applied to the doctrine of the Trinity, is susceptible of an absolute and easy demonstration; notwithstanding the objection itself claims the character of intuitive certainty. It is intuitively certain, or in other language, self-evident, that no proposition can be seen to be either true, or false, unless the mind possess the ideas, out of which it is

formed, so far as to discern whether they agree, or disagree. The proposition, asserted by *Trinitarians*, and denied by *Unitarians*, is, *that God is Tri-personal*. The ideas, intended by the words *God*, here denoting the infinite Existence; and *Tri-personal*; are not, and cannot be, possessed by any man. Neither *Trinitarians* nor *Unitarians* therefore, can, by any possible effort of the understanding, discern whether this proposition be true, or false; or whether the ideas, denoted by the words *God and Tri-personal*, agree, or disagree. Until this can be done, it is perfectly nugatory, either to assert, or deny, this proposition, as an object of intellectual discernment, or Philosophical inquiry. Where the mind has not ideas, it cannot compare them; where it cannot compare them, it cannot discern their agreement or disagreement; and of course it can form out of them, no proposition, whose truth, or falsehood, it can at all perceive. Thus this boasted objection is so far from being conclusive, or even formidable; that it is wholly without force, or application.

After all that has been said, it may still be asked; “Why, if this proposition be thus unintelligible, do *Trinitarians* adopt it as an essential part of their creed?” I answer, “Because God has declared it.” Should it be asked, “Of what use is a proposition, thus unintelligible?” I answer, “Of inestimable use;” and this answer I explain in the following manner. The unintelligibility of this doctrine lies in the nature of the thing, which it declares, and not in the fact declared. The nature of the thing declared is absolutely unintelligible; but the fact is, in a certain degree, understood without difficulty. *What God is*, as One, or as Three in One, is perfectly undiscernable by us. *Of the existence*, thus described, we have no conception. But the assertions, *that He is One*, and *that He is Three in One*, are easily comprehended. The propositions, *that the Father is God*, *that the Son is God*, *that the Holy Ghost is God*; and *that these Three are One God*; are equally intelligible with the proposition, *that there is One God*. On these propositions, understood as facts, and received on the credit of the divine Witness, and not as discerned by mental speculation, is dependant the whole system of Christianity. —The importance of the doctrine is therefore supreme.

The utmost amount of all, that can be said against the doctrine of the Trinity, is, *that it is mysterious, or inexplicable*. A mystery, and a mystery as to its nature wholly inexplicable, it is cheerfully acknowledged to be by every *Trinitarian*; but no *Trinitarian* will, on that account, admit, that it ought to be less an object of his belief. Were the faith, or even the knowledge, of man usually conversant about objects, which

are not mysterious; mysteriousness might, with a better face, be objected against the doctrine of the Trinity. But mystery envelopes almost all the objects of both. We believe, nay, we know, the existence of one God; and are able to prove him self-existent, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, unchangeable, and eternal. But no more absolute mysteries exist, than in the being, nature, and attributes, of God. The Soul of Man, the Body of Man, a Vegetable, an Atom, are all subjects filled with mysteries; and about them all a Child may ask questions, which no Philosopher can answer. That God, therefore, should *in his existence* involve many mysteries, inexplicable by us, is so far from violating, or stumbling, a rational faith, that it ought to be presumed. The contrary doctrine would be still more mysterious, and far more shock a rational mind." p. 137—40.

The discourse upon the covenant of redemption, is a clear and lucid statement of a doctrine what we love to hold. - And here our author maintains, "that God the father entered into a covenant with Christ, in which he promised him, on condition that he should become a propitiation, and intercessor, for sinners, as a reward for his labours and sufferings, the future possession of a church, which under her government should be glorious and happy forever." (p. 213.) He then proceeds to prove, "that this covenant was made from eternity;" "that it was the basis on which was founded the whole system of providential dispensations towards the church;" and that "the church thus promised to Christ, as the reward of his mediation, is formed of a great multitude of mankind." In his remarks, he gives us the following passage which contains the substance of the doctrine.

"If the observations, made in the progress of this discourse, are just; then it follows by irresistible consequence, that the salvation of the righteous, or of all who will be ultimately saved, was contemplated, and resolved on, by God, from the beginning, or from everlasting. It was, also, made the subject of a solemn Covenant between the Father and the Son. It was not, therefore, in any sense a thing, which grew out of a *contingency*; according to the scheme of *Dr. Price* and others; a remedy, *provided for evils unforeseen*; a thing, grafted upon the fall of man, which they consider as an accident, springing out of that liberty of contingency, which they suppose indispensable to the free volitions of a moral being. St. Paul teaches us, that God, the Father, *created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent, that now unto principalities, and powers, in heavenly places might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God: According to the eternal purpose,*

*which he purposed in Christ Jesus our LORD.* Here it is declared to be a part of the *eternal purpose of GOD in Jesus Christ, to create all things by him, to the intent that, principalities and powers might know, by means of the Church, that is, by means of his dispensations to the church, the manifold wisdom of GOD.* Of course, *the existence of the Church* was an essential part of this eternal purpose. Of course also, the existence of the church was foreknown, and resolved on, as a part of this purpose. Its existence, therefore, was in no sense contingent; in no sense accidental; in no sense dependent on any thing, by which it could be prevented. In accordance with this declaration, *St. Paul* says, 2 Tim. i. 9, *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and grace, which was given us, before the world began.* In this passage Christians are said to be saved according to the purpose and grace of GOD, given to them, in the strong figurative language of the Apostle, *before the world began*; that is, in simpler language, resolved on, established for them, given in the counsels of GOD; so as to be indefeasible by any subsequent event. Thus is this passage explained in the corresponding one of Titus 1st and 2nd, *In hope of eternal life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* Here the grace and salvation, said in the passage, last quoted, to be given, is called *eternal life*, and is declared to be PROMISED before the world began. The existence of the Church, the eternal life of its members, and the grace, by which that life is attained, were all promised before the world began: promised, I apprehend, in the Covenant, which we have been contemplating; and plainly an essential part of the providential system, relating immediately to the inhabitants of this world." p. 216—17.

The sermons which follow upon the character of Christ, as a Prophet, Priest, and King, are all excellent illustrations of the word of God. Those upon the doctrine of the atonement, particularly, contain able and interesting views of the subject. We must beg leave however to differ from our author as to the extent of the atonement, which he thinks was made for all mankind, as well as for the elect: we believe it was confined to the last. And in truth the very word seems enough to prove this. Thus our author himself tells us, "the word, atonement, in its original sense, always denotes some amends, or satisfaction, for the neglect of some duty, or the commission of some fault; a satisfaction, with which, when supposed to be complete, the person injured ought reasonably to be contented, and to demand of the offender nothing more on account of his transgression." (p. 376.) And again, he says, "in

every case of personal, or vicarious, atonement, the services rendered must be of such value as to become a reasonable, and full satisfaction for the injury done; all that justice can fairly demand, or render." (p. 377.) But how then can it be said, that any atonement has been made for the sins of those, who shall die under the curse of the law? We must therefore adopt the doctrine of particular redemption. At the same time we do not adopt the reasonings by which it is often supported. We discard particularly the idea, (a little profane to our feelings,) of so much suffering for so much sin. We believe that the atonement was of infinite value in its nature, and limitable in its extent only by the good pleasure of God. But this good pleasure, we think, has in the very deed of grace, the covenant of redemption, actually limited its extent to the seed. But if the atonement is limited to the elect, our author asks how are others guilty in rejecting it? Just upon the same principle that they are guilty in rejecting it, if according to his scheme, the atonement is applied only to the elect. Human guilt, in the very nature of the thing, must always be estimated without reference to the secret decrees of grace. If the atonement is sufficient for all men, why do not all receive it, as well as the elect? Only because they will not. Here lies their guilt, and this is not lessened by the fact, that God has limited the ransom to the seed, in the covenant of redemption; any more than by the supposition that he merely applies it to them, in the decree of election. After all, the question between us, is perhaps rather more a dispute about words, than some are willing to admit. For ourselves, though we certainly prefer our own view, (which is also that of our confession,) we are not disposed to go to war for the point. At any rate, we shall readily agree with our author in the fine strain of sentiment, with which he closes the subject.

“The Gospel takes man, where it finds him, in a state of sin and ruin, condemned by the law of God to final perdition, and incapable of justification, by his own righteousness. In this situation, it announces to him a Saviour, divinely great and glorious, divinely excellent and lovely, assuming his nature, to become an expiation for his sins; revealing to him the way of reconciliation to God; and inviting him to enter it, and be saved. The acceptance of this expiation it announces from the mouth of God himself. The terms, on which we may be reconciled, it discloses with exact precision and perfect clearness; so that *he who runs may read*; so that beggars and children may understand, and accept them. Faith in the Redeemer, repentance towards God, and holiness of character, involve them all. They are terms, reasonable in themselves,

easy to us, and productive of incomprehensible good to all who embrace them. To overcome the stubbornness of our hearts, Christ has commissioned the SPIRIT OF GRACE to sanctify us for himself; to draw us with the cords of his love; to guide us with his wisdom; to uphold us with his power; and to conduct us under his kind providence to the heavens. In this scheme is contained all that we need, and all that we can rationally desire. The way of salvation is here become a *high-way, and way-faring men, though fools, need not err therein.*

The Religion of the Gospel is a religion designed for *sinners.* By the expiation of Christ it opens the brazen door, which was for ever barred against their return. Here the supreme, and otherwise immoveable, obstacle to the acceptance of sinners, is taken away. If sinners were to be accepted, it was not possible that *this cup should pass from Christ.* The next great obstacle in the way of their acceptance is found in their unholy, disobedient hearts, propense to *evil only, and continually;* and the next, their perpetual exposure to backsliding, and to falling finally away. These obstacles, immoveable, also, by any means on this side of heaven, the Spirit of grace by his most merciful interference in our behalf entirely removes. Man, therefore, in the Gospel finds his return from apostacy made possible; made easy; made certain; actually begun; steadily carried on in the present world; and finally completed in the world to come.

But no other scheme of religion presents to us even plausible means of removing these difficulties. *Natural religion,* to which Infidels persuade us to betake ourselves for safety, does not even promise us a return to God. *Natural religion is the religion of law;* of that law, which in the only legal language declares to us, *Do these things, and thou shalt live: but the soul, that sinneth, shall die.* *These things,* the things specified in the requisitions of the law, we have not done; and therefore cannot live. We have sinned, and therefore must die. It has been formerly shown, that the law knows no condition of acceptance, or justification, but obedience. Concerning repentance, faith, forgiveness, and reconciliation, concerning the sinner's return to God, and his admission to immortal life, the law is silent. Its only sentence, pronounced on those who disobey, is a sentence of final condemnation.

Whatever we may suppose the law to be, we have disobeyed its precepts. Nothing has been ever devised, or received, by man as a law of God, which all men have not disobeyed. Infidels cannot devise such a law, as they will dare to call a law of God, and publish to men under this title, which they

themselves, and all other men, have not often disobeyed. From the very nature of law, a nature inseparable from its existence as a law, disobedience to its precepts must be condemned: and, if nothing interfere to preserve the offender from punishment, he must of necessity suffer. To what degree, in what modes, through what extent, these sufferings will reach, the Infidel cannot conjecture. To this anguish no end appears. Of such an end no arguments can be furnished by his mind; no tidings have reached his ear; and no hopes can rationally arise in his heart. Death, with all the gloomy scenes attendant upon a dying bed, is to him merely the commencement of doubt, fear, and sorrow. The grave, to him, is the entrance into a world, of absolute and eternal darkness. That world, hung round with fear, amazement, and despair, overcast with midnight, melancholy with solitude, desolate of every hope of real good, opens to him through the dreary passage of the grave. Beyond this entrance he sees nothing, he knows nothing, he can conjecture nothing, but what must fill his heart with alarm, and make his death-bed a couch of thorns. With a suspense, scarcely less terrible than the miseries of damnation itself, his soul lingers over the vast and desolate abyss; when, compelled by an unseen, and irresistible hand, it plunges into this uncertain and irreversible doom, to learn by experience what is the measure of woe, destined to reward those, *who obey not God*, and reject the salvation proffered by his Son.

In such a situation what man, not yet lost to sense and thought, not yet convinced, that he has committed the sin which cannot be forgiven, would not hail with transport the dawn of the Gospel; the clear rising of the Sun of righteousness; to illumine his path through this melancholy world; to dispel the darkness of the grave; to shed a benevolent light upon the entrance into eternity, and brighten his passage to the heavens? p. 419—21.

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DISCUSSIONS OF SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

No. IV.

*On the Question, What did Jesus Christ do for us when he was on earth?*

“WHAT think ye of Christ?” was an interrogatory put by our Lord to some who heard him when personally present

in our world. And generally we have heard the complaint made by christians that they are prone to entertain too low thoughts of their Saviour; that is, that they do not appreciate as they ought the favours conferred by him. Yet there seems to be a class of men among us, whose principal apprehension is that they shall think too highly of the Lord who bought them; shall too highly rate their obligations to Jesus Christ. And here it seems clear that there can be no religious communion between them and christians. For if Christ is not a *Divine Redeemer*, christians are guilty of daily idolatry; and if he is, Socinians refuse to render to him that love and honor, which as a divine being are justly his due. The subject then is not one of barren speculation, but involves some of the most important points of christian practice. What we are to think of Christ, then is a subject of no small importance, and deserves most serious enquiry. We shall be assisted in obtaining a satisfactory answer to this question by looking to scripture, and ascertaining what Christ did for us when he was on earth.

To enter fully into this subject, would require a recitation of almost the whole evangelical history. But for this there can be no occasion. That Jesus Christ sustains the office of a prophet, and has afforded the most important instructions, whereby his humble disciples grow wise unto salvation, is not here a matter of dispute—That he has set us an example, which we are bound to imitate, is admitted. Hence it follows that we ought to regard with deepest attention his instructions, promptly to obey his precepts, and carefully to tread in his footsteps. But is this all? We are persuaded that a diligent perusal of scripture, will convince a man of unsophisticated feelings, that Jesus Christ has done much more for his people than this. Let the following passages be duly considered, and the plain doctrine of them be heartily received.

*Matt. xx. 28.* Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, *and to give his life a RANSOM for many.*

A passage precisely parrallel to this occurs in, Mark chap. x. ver. 45.

*John x. 11, 15, 16, 17, 18.* I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life* for the sheep—As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, *because I lay down my life*, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

*Matt.* xxvi. 26—28. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave to the disciples, and said, “take, eat; this is my body.” And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the New Testament, *which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* See also *Mark* xiv. 24. *Luke* xxii. 19.

*Isai.* liii. 10, 11. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. See also *Daniel* ix. 24—26. *Rom.* iii. 24—26. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past; through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

*Gal.* iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

*2. Cor.* v. 21. For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

*Eph.* i. 6, 7. He hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins—v. 2. Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

*1. Tim.* ii. 6. [Christ Jesus] who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

*Tit.* ii. 14. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

An hundred other passages of similar import might be quoted from the New Testament. It is beyond dispute then, that according to the scriptures, Jesus Christ by his suffering unto death procured for us sinners the most important benefits. If human language can convey any definite meaning, we are to believe that the death of Christ has an inseparable connection with the pardon of our offences; so that by this death and in no other way, a believer is warranted to expect forgiveness. Let us look a little at some of the texts quoted.

In Matt. xx. 28. Our Lord says that he came to give his life a *ransom* for many. What is the meaning of the word (*Λυτρον*) rendered ransom? It occurs only twice in the New Testament; in this, and in the parallel passage in Mark. It is used, however, about twenty times in the Septuagint, and signifies redemption, or rather the price of redemption, as in Lev. xxv. 24, 51. Num. xxxv. 31. This last passage is remarkable. "Moreover ye shall take no *satisfaction* for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death; but he shall surely be put to death." Here, the word is translated satisfaction; and evidently means that which was paid in the way of commutation for punishment. The word is used in the same sense, Exod. xxi. 30. "If there be laid on him a sum of money, then shall he give for the ransom of his life, whatever is laid upon him." In Isai. xlv. 13, it is applied to the redemption of captives. God by the mouth of his prophet is speaking of Cyrus, "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives not for *price* nor reward, saith the Lord of Hosts". It is used in the same way by Josephus. Ant. book xiv. ch. 14. The passage is thus translated, "Herod not knowing what had happened to his brother hastened to redeem him from the enemy, and was willing to pay for his ransom a sum of money, to the amount of three hundred talents." Demosthenes applies it in a manner precisely similar; Orat. Cont. Nicostratum. Hesychius says that *Λυτρα* (the plural of the original word occurring in Matt.) are all those things which are given for the recovery of men. Eustathius on the Iliad remarks, that the gifts made for the recovery of men from captivity are called *Λυτρα*. Authorities might be multiplied to any extent. We are warranted then in affirming that the word, in its direct and proper signification, designates the price of redemption, whether from slavery or death. When therefore Jesus Christ affirms that he came to give his life a *ransom* for many, we are clearly to understand that in giving his life, or in suffering death, he paid a redemption price for us. This subject is illustrated by the words of our Saviour, in the institution of the Lord's Supper. He declares that his blood was shed for the remission of sins. Let this declaration be considered in connection with that which assures us; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;" and we cannot but admit that, according to the scriptures, believers are pardoned on account of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Is it not wonderful that any, who profess to believe the Bible, with the words of Christ

before them, in which he says that he came to give his life a redemption price for many, and that his blood was shed for the remission of sins, should affirm that he died only that he might set an example to his followers, or that he might give a martyr's testimony to his doctrines?

The next passage to which we particularly advert is that in Rom. iii. 24—26." Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood, &c. Here the inquiry is, what is the true meaning of the word rendered propitiation (in Greek *ἱλαστήριον*)—It is derived from a verb which signifies to propitiate, to pardon, to expiate; and in the passive form, to be rendered propitious. Hence the direct and proper signification of the word is, that which has the efficacy of expiating, of rendering propitious. And as the word is an adjective, it is a question with what substantive does it agree, in the passage. Some critics of great note suppose that *Θυια*, a sacrifice, is understood: so that it ought to be rendered. "Whom God hath set forth as a propitiatory sacrifice, &c. The etymology of the word and its general usage in Greek, support this interpretation; and for ourselves, we see no strong objection against it. Admit it to be correct, and it is impossible to find language more strongly to convey the idea that Jesus Christ suffered in the stead of sinners, and by his sufferings made an expiation of their sins; such an expiation as justice demanded, so that "God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

But it ought to be observed that this word occurs only twice in the New Testament, and that in the other passage, Heb. ix. 5. it is translated *Mercy-seat*. It is also used twenty or thirty times in the Septuagint, and, almost always, in the same sense. Exod. xxv. 10—22. "And they shall make an ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.—And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold: within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.—And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *shall be* in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it.—And thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold.—And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.—The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it.—And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony, which I shall give

thee.—And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.—And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat.—And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; *even* of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.—And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.—And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee.—And there I will meet with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment to the children of Israel.”

The English word mercy-seat is a translation of the Hebrew כפרת covering, from כפר to cover, and frequently, to expiate, from the idea that expiation covers or obliterates sin. Why this word should be rendered by a Greek term, signifying expiatory, or having the efficacy of expiating may be understood by adverting to the use of the ark, and the covering of the ark, which was thus designated. The ark was principally used for preserving the two tables of the covenant; and was closed or covered by the mercy-seat. Here was the symbol of the divine presence. On it, and before it, the priest was to sprinkle the blood of the expiatory sacrifices, on the great day of atonement. And here God promised to meet and commune with his people. As the mercy-seat then was a covering to the law; and as there, expiatory offerings were made, and God manifested his presence, and showed his favour, the word *Ἰλασ터리ον*, expiatory, was well applied to it. And this application shows the meaning of the apostle, when he says, that God hath set forth Christ as *ILASTERION*, a propiatory covering through faith in his blood. Here is the true mercy-seat, and here the great expiation was made of the sins of men. This interpretation, then, brings us to the same conclusion with the other; and we may affirm that Christ died for our sins: in other words, he died to make such satisfaction to divine justice, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

In connection with this text, we may advantageously consider that in 2. Cor. v. 21. “For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

In the clause, *to be sin for us*, the word translated sin is, in Greek, *αμαρτια*; and its signification is of great importance in the passage. Its uses are various. The primary signification is, wandering from a mark, or turning from a straight path: hence, it is ordinarily used to signify sin, and not unfrequently the punishment of sin. And hence again, it is put for that which bears the punishment of sin. It is thus used by the Septuagint in the following passages. Levit. iv. 21. "And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a *sin-offering* for the congregation: ver. 25, And the priest shall take of the *sin-offering* with his finger, &c. ver. 34, we have the same form of expression. Compare with these, verses 8, 20, and 29. The reader who understands the original will see that the word, in these passages, which is translated a sin-offering, is the same with that in 2 Cor. v. 21, which is rendered sin. Other instances of this usage occur in Lev. v. 9, 12, vi. 25.— In the epistle to the Hebrews, ix. 28, we find a similar use of the passage, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him he shall appear the second time, *without sin*, (that is without being made an offering for sin,) unto salvation." It is remarked by Parkhurst that this manner of expression exactly corresponds to the Hebrew, where the sin and the sin-offering is denoted by the same word. Let the reader now turn to the fifty third chapter of Isajah, and compare the various passages cited above, with the prediction of the prophet respecting that person who is designated as the Arm of the Lord, and he will see that we are justified in rendering the part of scripture under consideration thus, "He made him who knew no sin, to be an offering to bear the punishment of sin, or, a sin offering, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

On the whole view of this subject, it appears abundantly clear to us, that Jesus Christ, when on earth, made an atonement for the sins of men; and that it is by virtue of his vicarious sufferings, that believers in him are pardoned. We state this as a historical fact, which seems to be as clearly announced in scripture, as any fact can be in words. God has thus informed us, in what way it is his determination to forgive sin; and has given to the awakened sinner the strongest assurance that all penitent believers shall be pardoned. It is thus that the gospel shews its adaptation to the wants of man, and is, in truth, glad tidings of great joy. But if Christ were a mere man, he was a sinner; for "We are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity; of course it was impossible for him to make atonement for the sins of men. They

who reject the Deity of our Saviour, are consistent in rejecting the doctrine of Atonement; but, then, how great a part of the gospel do they reject? And how flatly do they contradict the words of Christ and his apostles? Extirpate this doctrine from the New Testament, with all its connections and dependencies, and what would the gospel be to us? We venture to say that it would be fraught with despair. The pure and heavenly system of morality which it unfolds; would only serve to show our depravity of heart and rebellion in conduct, in a more glaring light; while the immortality of which it assures us, would be dreaded as our highest curse. But while we believe that through the infinite mercy of God "We are made accepted in the Beloved," we will rejoice in the gospel as suited to our fallen condition; and in that Saviour, "who hath loved us, and given himself for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

In our next we shall enquire into the direct evidences afforded in Scripture, concerning the nature of Christ.

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## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

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### THE RICHMOND SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

We take a deep interest in all that concerns Sabbath Schools; and, with grateful wonder, contemplate their astonishing progress within the last twelve or fifteen years. Their institution will form a new epoch in the history of the church. Already they constitute one of the most extensive, the cheapest, and most efficient means in that vast scheme of christian charity, which is now executing in the world. It is probable that, at this time, nearly one million of children are receiving instruction in these seminaries of morality and religion. And of these, multitudes, but for this noble establishment, would have grown up in utter ignorance and profligacy. The next generation will witness the beneficial effects of this system; and a demonstration on a large scale, will be afforded, of the value of an early religious education

We have not time, now, to enter into a detail of the advantages already derived from these schools. One delightful instance, however, which has recently come to our knowledge must not be suppressed. The celebrated Morrison, the famous Missionary, who has translated the scriptures into the language of China, and published a grammar and dictionary in Chinese, was once a scholar in a Sunday school, and received his first religious impressions, and the bias of his mind, to works of christian benevolence, in one of these humble seats of learning. And this man is now dispensing the blessings of the gospel to millions of heathen! How intimately are events, apparently trivial, connected with the greatest and most salutary revolutions in the world!

It deserves remark too, that great numbers of the first pupils, are now well qualified and efficient instruc-

ters in Sabbath schools. Thus, they who would, without these institutions, have been, by this time, prepared for every crime, are employed in doing good; are really and truly benefactors to society.

To turn from these general views to things nearer home—We notice with singular gratification the increasing zeal and interest in relation to Sabbath schools in Virginia. Almost every week we hear of the establishment of one or more, in some neighbouring county. It is a matter of regret, that more definite information cannot be received; and that the pious and benevolent will not take measures to concentrate the interesting intelligence, which events among us afford. Each individual, when he has any thing to communicate, writes to a distant acquaintance to the south or the north, and there is no combination of resources, or counsels, or interests here. We regret this, only because, acting in this desultory way, we shall accomplish less than if we were acting with the force of united exertion. There will, however; we hope, be a change in these things, and in process of time, we shall act more in concert. This remark has been suggested, by the growing prosperity of the Sunday school union of Richmond. We have been favoured with the last quarterly report of this association, and have been highly gratified to observe that, although it is small compared with many others, it is increasing; and that with this, there is an increase in the zeal of the meritorious individuals engaged in it.

The Richmond Sunday School Union, at present, consists of Presbyterians and Methodists; the other societies of christians choosing to conduct their schools separately. In this union there are four schools, five superintendants, four secretaries, and sixty one teachers. They have under their care about 640 scholars of all ages, from five or six to eighteen or twenty years. Most of these young persons were lately employing their Sabbaths in roaming through the streets and adjoining country, doing mischief, and forming evil habits; but now, they are taught to read, and are

instructed to fear and love God, to honour their parents, to love their brothers and sisters, to reverence their superiors, be kind to their equals, to hate lying and speak the truth, and to be neat and clean in their persons, and to attend public worship with decorum. At the same time, no efforts whatever are made to inculcate the peculiarities of a sect. The common doctrines of christianity are taught, and the children are accustomed to see the members of the two societies acting together in the utmost harmony and brotherly love.

The superintendants of the several schools, in their quarterly reports, give very satisfactory testimony of the general fidelity and zeal of the teachers, and improvement of the scholars.

The superintendant of school No. 1. mentions a boy who during the last quarter, committed to memory 264 verses in the Bible; the whole scriptural catechism consisting of thirty-five lessons; the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the ten commandments—And another of nine years old, who learned in one week thirteen lessons in the catechism.

The superintendant of school No. 2, states that there had been recited by memory during the last quarter, 2451 verses from the Bible, 6216 answers to the questions in Emerson's primer, 272 answers in the Familiar catechism, 3338 answers to Cumming's questions on the historical parts of the New Testament, and 2580 verses of select hymns.

He also makes the gratifying statement, that two who had been pupils, are now active and useful teachers in this school.

The school No. 3, which for some time lingered in a sort of dubious existence between life and death, and at the last report had registered only 59 learners, is now increased to the number of 156, and notwithstanding several untoward circumstances, has an average regular attendance of 76 scholars. Very satisfactory evidence is given of the improvement made in this school, and of unwearied perseverance and zeal in those who manage its details.

School No. 4, has been recently opened in the town of Manchester, under very auspicious circumstances. It has been in operation only three or four Sabbaths; and already, there are fully fifty scholars.

It is worthy of notice that, among the officers of the union, there is attached to each school what is called "A committee for visiting absentees." The members of these committees perform a double service of love. Of this some idea may be formed from the following extract from one of their reports. "May 23rd. The committee called on thirteen absentees, and visited a number of other families. They were conducted to a habitation of poverty which almost exceeds belief. Here they found; what they often find, a *poor widow without a bible*. This person had never heard of a Bible society.

The committee are more and more convinced of the importance of circulating Religious Tracts, among the destitute. They are often the means of arresting the attention of parents and children, when all other expedients fail. A man to whom the Swearer's prayer was given, asked with some degree of seriousness, if he could be furnished with a Tract, that would tell him how his sins might be forgiven. He was presented with a sermon by the Rev. Andrew Fuller, on these words, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Found several persons with families, who could not read, and encouraged them to come to the Sunday school."

We would here offer one or two suggestions for consideration.

1. Is it not unspeakably desirable that Sabbath schools should be established through the whole country—will they not generate and increase a spirit of improvement in the best things; and at the same time prevent the forming of those habits which are most opposed to the true interests of individuals and of society?

2. Would it not be well for a general union and co-operation to take place not only of the schools in Richmond, but in all the country connected with Richmond? The advantages of this measure would be numerous. A depository of Sunday school books might then be established, and supplies could be easily obtained. The general correspondence that would, in this case, be carried on, the reports that would be published, would excite a much deeper interest in the subject, and the intelligence and zeal of the united community would be brought to bear on this important business. And now is the time for this measure. The enterprize and benevolence of individuals have excited considerable interest already in many parts of the country, and, as was before remarked, new schools are frequently established. The greater facility that is found in this work, the greater certainty have we, that it will be pursued.

A friend has just informed us, that in the county of Goochland and on its borders, there are now five schools, containing at least two hundred scholars; and that it has been proposed that all these should, at once, become members of the Union. We know that they would be joyfully received. If any other school should approve of the plan, its superintendant may communicate with the Editor; and he assures them that their communications shall receive prompt attention.

We cannot conclude without expressing our high approbation of the benevolence and public spirit of those who spend their Sabbaths in instructing the ignorant, and training them up for usefulness in life, and happiness in heaven. They deserve more than a *civic* crown; and they will receive more; for "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars in the firmament forever and ever."

*To Correspondents.*—C. and A Reader, have been received.

We hope to present our readers with a considerable mass of Religious Intelligence next month.

ERRATUM.—No. IV. pa. 189. Rev. John I. Lee, is pastor of a BAPTIST church in Lynchburg. We had, through mistake, made him a Methodist.