

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XII.—No. II.

JULY, MDCCCLIX.

ARTICLE I.

FIRST PASTORAL LETTER OF THE SYNOD OF THE CAROLINAS.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.

The growth of the Presbyterian Church in the British colonies, now the United States of America, led to progressive changes in the boundaries of Presbyteries, of which we are reminded by the document before us. In 1716, the original General Presbytery, from which the General Assembly has been developed, was subdivided, and the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, New Castle, Snow Hill and Long Island, formed from it. In 1755, the Presbytery of Hanover was set off from the Presbytery of New Castle by the Synod of New York. In 1770, the Presbytery of Orange was erected out of that portion of the ministers and churches included in the province of North Carolina. With this were connected several ministers and churches in the upper part of South Carolina and Georgia. Fourteen years after, in 1784, the Presbytery of South Carolina was formed from the Presbytery of Orange, embracing such ministers in South Carolina and Georgia as were under its jurisdiction. In 1785, that part of the Presbytery of

to Zion, let their own conduct loudly speak, *follow me!* Let them of all denominations cling together like a band of brothers, to promote the same glorious and common cause, and testify to the world that Christ is not"* (divided.) . . .



ARTICLE II.

THE LECTURE SYSTEM—ITS INFLUENCE UPON YOUNG MEN.

It seems to have been reserved for this period in the world's history, to usher into existence the System of Lectures on subjects embracing a wide range, from the highest grade of the scientific to that type of moral instruction which, without invading actually the domain of the pulpit, approximates very nearly to its teachings. It is our honest conviction that this

* Here ends the pamphlet before us. How much is lacking we cannot determine, probably only a single leaf. It may have been signed by the Moderator of the Synod, the Rev. James Edmonds, and the Clerks, Rev. Thomas Reese and James McRee. It was adopted by the Synod of the Carolinas at its sessions at Poplar Tent Church, in Cabarras Co., N. C., according to the MS. copy of the Minutes now in our hands, on the 8th of September, 1789, not November, as the preface to the Pastoral Letter says. The Minute on that subject is the following:—"The intended Pastoral Letter was read, and the Rev. Hez. Balch, Samuel Doake and Robert Archibald, dissented from the mode of publication being preferred to that of license in the article of marriage, in voting on that subject."

The same Minutes Sept. 8d, 1789, refer again to the injurious report respecting the Synod of New York and Philadelphia:—"Synod took into consideration a report which has circulated through many of our churches, that the Synod of New York and Philadelphia had rejected the Larger Catechism, thought proper in the meantime to defer a further investigation of that matter; and ordered that a letter be written by Synod to the Rev. Robert Finley, and to that Presbytery in the bounds of which he may now reside, on that subject." These letters were subsequently brought in, read, and, with a few amendments, approved.—[EDITORS S. P. R.]

system has been already productive of great good; and under proper management and due limitation, may become the best of all auxiliaries to the Pulpit and the Sanctuary. The idea, honestly entertained by some well meaning moralists, and professed by some others who knew its futility, that "the stage is the supplement to the pulpit, and the auxiliary to virtue," is now almost, if not quite, exploded. Indeed, its absurdity is to us so palpable, that we can only wonder at the simplicity of the man who first conceived it, and gave it utterance. The origin of this idea, when honestly indulged, is to be traced to that principle of our nature which prompts men to seek after amusement and entertainment, even in the acquisition of the treasures of wisdom. Among the Athenians indeed, the drama was the legitimate vehicle of devotional emotion. The chorus represented the religious and moral element, and was, as we know, often the medium of communicating to the audience thoughts of exceeding beauty, and of surpassing grandeur and sublimity, upon subjects connected with man's duty and his destiny—sentiments often just enough to be worthy of a purer origin. The dialogue at the same time kept the attention in a state of earnestness, and relieved any tedium which otherwise might have crept upon the mind. But we are to remember that the Ancients possessed no higher or more influential agency to preserve the morals of the masses. The great schools of the philosophers were accessible or attractive only to a select few, while the multitude were thrown upon their own resources for amusement and instruction. The drama was the great national implement of moralizing and civilizing the people. The climax of proof given by the Great Teacher, of His Divine origin, "that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them," had never been announced, because it had never before been true in the experience of the world. When, however, it became a wonderful fact—and more wonderful *then* than *now* because of its newness—the class of men to whom the Gospel of Christ was foolishness, resorted to other sources, as they have ever done since, for instruction and entertainment, rather than to a system so alien to the corrupted tastes and depraved habitudes of human nature. Instead of being a supplement or an auxili-

ary, however, the stage, it cannot be doubted, has ever been the antagonist of the pulpit. Not that it has arrayed itself in open opposition; but by adorning bad characters with specious attractions calculated to ensnare the youthful and unwary into the admiration and imitation of gilded vices; by its setting forth the good and virtuous in attitudes calculated to inspire contempt; by kindling and inflaming the bad passions of our nature with exhibitions of licentiousness; and then by its dreadful concomitants of degradation, which seem unavoidably joined with the place and circumstances of the scene; by all these things is it shown, that between the stage and the pulpit there is a great gulf fixed. These are the fruits which show that it is a corrupt tree. No man, it may be safely ventured, was ever made better or wiser by being a constant attendant upon the amusements of the theatre. No man ever learned anything valuable which he might not have learned elsewhere, and that, too, at infinitely less hazard to his morals. No man ever found himself influenced by anything he saw or heard in a theatre, to love the Gospel, or to serve the Lord of the Gospel. It is, therefore, quite manifest, that the stage is no supplement or auxiliary to the pulpit.

But we have intimated that some men, and we may say a majority of men, desire and will have some system of instructive entertainment somewhat different from the pulpit, and somewhat humbler in its character. Perhaps it may be otherwise in the days of the Millennium. For aught we know, in that age of holiness, all men may find that the preaching of the Gospel is the most delightful of all public speaking, and that no intermediate or subordinate form of address will be called for to meet a want that seems to be now felt by very many. Within a few years past, the practice of independent lectures has grown up into a regular institution, to which the technical name, "the platform" has been assigned, just as to the theatre the name "the stage," and to the preaching of the Gospel, "the pulpit," have been given. Mercantile Library Associations, Young Men's Christian Associations, and other kindred fraternities, have felt that the establishment of a regular course of lectures, to be delivered during the busy winter months, in

the long winter evenings, by men possessed of popular lecturing abilities, would be at once a most admirable method of imparting a vast amount of valuable instruction to many, who either had never enjoyed, or had failed properly to appreciate advantages of regular academic instruction, and also would furnish a place of resort for many who might otherwise have been seduced to the dens of infamy, with which our large cities abound. This has been eminently true of the Young Men's Christian Association of London. This Society is said to be the first of the kind ever formed. A contemporary writer states, that its origin "bears date in June, 1844. It was organized with a view to the improvement, both physical and moral, of the young men employed as clerks, and otherwise, in the great metropolis, and contemplated the establishment of prayer meetings and Bible classes for their benefit. Nine months after its organization, a public meeting was held, at which its membership was reported to be 160, and before long a lively interest was taken in its welfare, both by laity and clergy. During the first winter of its existence, a course of lectures was delivered by some of the leading ministers of the country, and the same plan has been pursued, with much profit and interest, during each succeeding winter." Its membership, as we learn from the same writer, is now about 2,000. The organization of this Association, and its objects, led in 1848 to the organization of others of a similar character in various other of the leading towns and cities of England, France, Switzerland and Holland. As early as 1848, such a Society was established in Cincinnati, then others during the next year in Montreal and Boston. Subsequently they were formed in almost every city in the Union, so that at the present time there are said to be about 150 of these Associations in our country, with an aggregate membership of 20,000. Before these Associations, courses of lectures are nearly always delivered during some portion of the year, and the privilege of attending and hearing them is freely extended to the public.

But we have seen no published series of lectures as the fruit of the system, save in the case of the London Association. There are two volumes now before us, containing each thirteen

lectures, by some of the most distinguished ministers and laymen of Great Britain. Among them we find the names of such men as Dr. John Cumming, Dr. Candlish, the lamented Hugh Miller, Dr. McNeile of Liverpool, Dr. Guthrie,—men who are widely known on both sides of the Atlantic,—with many others of high claims to admiration, though not so celebrated. We find in both these volumes a lecture from John B. Gough, of temperance memory. Nor do we find a single one among these many excellent lectures, at all surpassing in style, matter or finish, the lecture by the Rev. W. Morley Punshon, of Sheffield, England, on “The Prophet of Horeb: his life and its lessons.” We understand that this is the same young clergyman of whom it was stated in the papers some two years since, that he was rivalling Spurgeon in the popularity of his preaching in England. He is a minister of the Methodist Church, and is a young man who has not yet reached the prime of his days. His style is far more finished and elegant than that of Spurgeon, and he is evidently a man of far greater learning and more cultivated intellect. With a certain class, too, he will doubtless be always a more attractive speaker. Spurgeon’s power lies in his simplicity and earnestness, and in the directness of his applications of the truth to the heart and conscience. In passing we may remark, that the idea has been advanced by some that in all probability Spurgeon’s popularity would not be so great on this side the Atlantic as on the other, from the fact, that our people have been accustomed to the plain, earnest, animated and direct style of preaching, far more than our trans-atlantic friends. To them it is something new. They have been accustomed to the precise, formal, nice, essay-like sermon so long, that the preaching of Spurgeon was a refreshing change, and awakened a very great enthusiasm from its very novelty. Whether we can ever decide the question as to his comparative acceptableness *here* and *there*, is doubtful now, whatever it may have been had his *debut* been made in the United States, instead of in England. For we must not lose sight of the fact, that his great reputation will secure him wonderful notoriety here, should he ever visit us, apart from his real merits. The great multitude do not trouble themselves

with independent thinking and judging for themselves, but suffer others to do it for them. We venture to say, however, that the modern Whitefield will be greatly sought after whenever he visits our country, and that his preaching will be highly appreciated; and, we will add, deservedly so. Still, we hesitate not to say, that Mr. Punshon is the better writer, and would be very far the more interesting speaker. His style is ornate; his sentiments are just and weighty, and there is never a descent to the lower and more vulgar modes of expression sometimes adopted by public speakers. While we are penning these lines, it is announced in the public journals of our country that the "Lecture System" has, at least in one instance, proved a failure. Had no explanation been given of the cause of this failure, still we should not have been led to doubt the beneficial influence of the system from an isolated case of this kind. And even were other cases presented where not only the System of Lectures had fallen through and been abandoned, but where even Young Men's Christian Associations had been disbanded and dissolved, we should not be the more inclined to believe that such leagues are useless. Because, as it is an undoubted fact, that one such Association, with one such system under its direction, has been in successful operation, with annually increasing interest and advantage, for fourteen years past, we must conclude that the reasons for a want of success must be sought, not so much in the system as in the men or the circumstances connected with its management. Accordingly, in the case just alluded to, the secret is plainly to be understood, since in the language of one of our best religious journals, commenting upon the failure: "Any one who will look over the list of the lecturers who have been invited by this Association (the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association of Cincinnati) to lecture for a few years past, must be struck with the fact, that they are nearly all from the school of Rationalists, and Free Thinkers in religion, or downright Infidels. The fact that a man was evangelical in his sentiments, seemed to shut him out from all such Associations." Now, we agree with the writer, "that this abandonment of the system of lecturing, as above, ought to have taken place long ago," or rather it should never

have been inaugurated. But this is only the abuse, not the legitimate use of the system. Let the young men of our country band themselves together after the manner and upon the principles of the Young Men's Christian Association of London, and let them be careful to obtain the services of such men as Cumming, Guthrie, Punshon, Gough, Landels, Miller, McNeille, Candlish and others, whose names appear on the list of their lecturers, and then let such gifted men as these go and deliver each in his turn a lecture on subjects such as we find adopted by these men, of practical utility, full of instruction, and every one made to bear definitely and forcibly on life and destiny, here and hereafter, and it is inconceivable how such enterprises should fail to be powerfully beneficial independently, and also directly auxiliary and supplemental to the great work of the pulpit.

To undertake anything like an analysis of these excellent volumes which are before us, would necessitate the production of a volume at least. We only design to select a random passage of superior excellence here and there, to serve as a specimen of the whole, and to show what we should consider a good System of Lectures for young men.

And we first call attention to a lecture delivered by the Rev. Wm. Landels, of Birmingham, on "*The Haldanes.*" The very announcement of such a subject would of itself give us a key to the character of the system, and reflects great credit upon the judgment of the lecturer, and the taste of his audience. To other bodies of young men, a subject of a nature more scientific or secular, or metaphysical, would have been more acceptable. But to this Association it seems the records of the history, work and character, of two men who devoted themselves, soul and body, life and fortune, to the promotion of God's glory and the salvation of sinners—who, although in truth extraordinary men, yet were only "great in the sight of the Lord,"—formed a topic of absorbing interest. Just here an extract will exhibit the views of the lecturer on this very topic, as well as serve for a favorable specimen of the lecture. Speaking of the self-sacrificing zeal of the Haldanes, in abandoning a lucrative and honorable profession for the ministry, he says:

"If there be no world, my worldly-minded brothers, but that which thou seest with thy grovelling earthly soul,—if there be no invisible power behind the visible phenomena with which thou art so much engrossed,—if above the world there be not a God, whom thou canst not see,—if this little life bounds our being, and there be no eternity beyond, to which you and I, and all of us, are hastening, unquestionably these men were mad. But ——— to a man reading the secrets of eternity, it matters little what becomes of his clay; whether you lay it covered with honors in the national Pantheon, or cast it unheeded into a common grave, will not diminish or increase, by one iota, his pleasure or his pain. In the British Museum, the other day, I stood amid the withered remains of Egyptian priests and kings, and fell into sad and solemn musings on the vanity of earthly grandeur. Thousands of years ago they lived and reigned—perhaps the Wellingtons or Napoleons of their age and country. Nations had mourned their death. Their funeral rites had been costly and magnificent; and they had lain in splendid sepulchres for centuries, until the sons of a land of which they had not even heard the name, rudely disturbed the silence in which they had so long reposed, and bore them away that they might become spectacles for the gratification of the curious. And this, I thought, is earthly glory! This is all the posthumous distinction which wealth and rank can procure!—that after being preserved for centuries, their sepulchres may be robbed of their contents, and their bodies become gazing stocks to the vulgar throng. Surely the Haldanes made a wiser choice. To be known as having done something for the moral and religious regeneration of a country—to have left thousands behind to whom the savor of their memory is sweet—to have their names enrolled among the benefactors of the Church and of the world—even this is a greater honor than the world can bestow. And when we turn to higher things, and think of them as enjoying the reward of those who turn many to righteousness, then do we see, that above all others, 'he that winneth souls is wise;' that it is better, infinitely better, than to have been famed for eminence in the walks of literature, for scientific discovery, or for the conquest of a kingdom or a world, to have, by faithful labors like theirs, rescued souls from death, and thus multiplied the gems that sparkle in the diadem that decks a Saviour's brow. Let us cultivate, my brothers, this noble ambition. To employ our best energies in doing good; to spend and be spent in promoting the welfare of others, be this our work. To glorify God in the salvation of men, be this our highest aim. And when we have laid ourselves down to die—when our earthly race is run, and the Master's voice summons us to his presence—to leave some behind us who will cherish our memories as their best benefactors, some who will continue to bless the world when we are gone; and, perchance, to have some before us who, when the last struggle has ended in victory, shall welcome our ascending spirits, and bear us amid the acclamations of angels, and the 'well done' of the Judge, through the shining ranks of the redeemed, to our throne on high—be this, oh! be this, our abundant reward!"

There may be nothing very eloquent or striking in the foregoing. It is not for that we extract it. We here see, however, that Mr. Landels thinks correctly, and speaks earnestly, and the proof that his lecture was acceptable to his audience, lies in the fact, that he was invited to lecture before the same Association the next winter, and appears as one of a noble class of lecturers, having chosen for his topic "Popular Fallacies," in which he vindicates Christianity from many current charges, and disabuses the mind of many false impressions on the subject of morals and of right principles of action.

With regard to the Haldanes, we may remark, that few topics of greater practical power, and furnishing more important lessons to young men, could have been selected, than the biography of these two men. And the lecturer manages his subject skillfully. He divides the sketch into three heads. I. Their history. II. Their work. III. Their character. He tells the story briefly, but well. They were both naval officers—Robert in the British navy, and James in the service of the East India Company—both had fine advantages of early education, and were men of strong native powers. Having been left orphans at a very early age, and thus deprived of the care of pious parents, it is a remarkable fact, that although surrounded by all the evil influences to which sea-faring men were exposed at that period, and influenced, too, as they often were by the corrupt principles of the times—yet, within a short time of each other, acting not at all in concert, widely separated, "in different ways both pass through the crisis of being, experience a change in feeling, in thought, in motive, in the principles and ends of action—a change, the issue of which eternity alone will disclose." Our author gives us, no doubt, the solution of the matter in referring to the influence of a pious mother as one of the causes of their seriousness and subsequent conversion. For, although they were deprived of her at the early ages of six and ten years, yet "brief as was the period" during which they were under her care, "we trace its influence throughout the whole of their after life. While living without God, their mother's memory ever and anon presents itself as a guardian angel, gently upbraiding them for their

folly, and winning them to a wiser course. The tones of a mother's voice linger in their ears, like strains of unearthly music from a far-off land, telling them of something higher and better than their present life. A mother's form comes up before the eye of their memory. The influence of a mother's prayers surrounds them, and now and again they are reminded of her instructions and her counsels."

Here, then, among a thousand other examples, we find God putting honor upon maternal fidelity, and the appeal must always strike with emphasis and power upon the heart of the ingenuous youth, to keep him in the path of wisdom, or to win him from the way of the destroyer. It would be a pleasing task to extract largely from this excellent lecture, but we must hasten to other points, as we wish to notice three other lectures taken from different parts of these volumes, and showing the varied character of the subjects. As to the work of the Haldanes, which forms the second division of the subject, it consisted in the performance of an extraordinary amount of labor in the pastoral work as well as the missionary field at home and abroad. In the prosecution of these labors, they encountered much opposition "from the clergy—were dragged unjustly before magistrates, and interrupted and assailed by men who called themselves gentlemen." But, "in spite of opposition, James went from place to place, preaching now in churches or in chapels, as the case might be, and now in the open air." These labors in extent, and in their effects, "bore a closer resemblance to those which attended the preaching of Whitefield, than any thing in modern times." Besides personal toil, Robert Haldane cheerfully spent a fortune of sixty or seventy thousand pounds, in the course of a few years, in training hundreds of young men for the ministry, in building chapels or tabernacles, and in printing and circulating myriads of Gospel tracts, and other religious publications. The most remarkable fact, however, in their work, was the visit of Robert to Geneva and to Montauban—the two centres of theological education—and his success in reforming the religion of the Continent. The reader of church history knows that at the period of this visit in 1816 and 1817, these celebrated

schools of sacred learning had fallen into the most deplorable ignorance of the way of salvation. To repeat here one of our author's quotations:—"Geneva, once the glory of the Reformation—the battle-field of light and darkness—the Thermopylæ of Protestantism—from whose Alpine heights the light of Gospel truth streamed with brilliant lustre athwart the blackness of Papal superstition—had fallen from her ancestral faith, and proved how vain are historic names, orthodox creeds and Scriptural formularies, where the spirit has ceased to animate the lifeless frame." Montauban was in a similar condition. They were Socinians at both schools. And now for the result of this visit of Robert Haldane—a solitary individual to these halls of learning. By private conversation, and by expositions of Scripture in his own room, he succeeded, under God's blessing, in bringing to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, "upwards of sixty ministers, among whom were many men of mark, such as Merle D'Aubigne, Malan, Monod, and others." And then, if we add to these direct results of Haldane's labors, the thousands of others who have been influenced by the labors of these great preachers, we may well be amazed at the wonders achieved by one man working in the strength of the Lord Jehovah.

With a brief analysis of their character, (his third topic,) we pass from Mr. Landel's lecture. He set forth as the prominent and operative traits of these men: 1. *Remarkable decision*; 2. *Sober mindedness*; 3. *Self-sacrificing zeal*; 4. *High regard for the Word of God*; and 5. *Habitual godliness*; and having filled up each point with illustrative statements, closes by an earnest exhortation to his audience to imitate these men.

The only thing abating in any degree from the effect of this delineation of character, is the statement that they twice made changes in their ecclesiastical status. They were originally members of the Church of Scotland, but in 1799 entered a Congregational Church, and in 1808 they changed their views on the subject of baptism. To be sure a man is not to be censured for an honest change of sentiment on conviction. But there is something in these ecclesiastical transitions that argues either want of due deliberation in the first place, or fickleness,

or some cause even more censurable than that in many instances. Nor does the cause assigned for their change of views on baptism reflect much credit upon their skill in exegesis, viz: that "the *more simply* they followed the Lord, the more useful they should in reality be." This sounds very much like the old argument so powerful with our colored friends: "*if you want to follow the Lord right, follow him down into the water!*" But this aside, we certainly think that the lecture of Mr. Landels on the Haldanes is worthy the study of Christian young men; and we repeat, he showed his good judgment in selecting, and the Association manifested a pure and correct taste in appreciating, a lecture on such a subject.

We next select extracts from a lecture by Dr. Cumming, on "Labor, Rest and Recreation." The remarks of the lecturer on labor are eminently just, and we commend them to the consideration of all who employ operatives in manual toil of any kind:

"Labor is good in moderation. It is injurious only in intensity or excess. Too intense or long it ought not to be. Surely it is monstrous that what was meant to sustain life, should ever be desecrated to destroy it; that what was designed to give man, by his wages, opportunities of enjoyment, leisure, recreation, should *degrade him into a slave*. For what is a slave? That young man whose every waking hour is his employer's—whose every sleeping hour is the insensibility of exhaustion—whose Sundays must be spent in compensatory sleep, or are spent in the indulgence of deadly stimulants generated by excessive toil—is a slave in the *intensest sense of that word*."

Now, we would advise the tender-hearted friend of the black man, whose sympathies are so intensely excited by the imagined oppressions of that abused race, to study the facts here merely intimated. He will find what large minded philanthropists, such as Dr. Cumming, have long known; that in the midst of what are vauntingly called free States—in free Old England and free New England—there is an actual existence and operation, a system of slavery infinitely more galling and oppressive than black servitude in the hated South of this Republic. A comparison of the factory operative, the half human miner in the coal pits, shut out from the light of day, and *crawling on all fours* harnessed to a coal car; or even of the pale and

exhausted midnight clerk starving for fresh air and exercise; and then, when by this system of ceaseless toil, crushed and prostrated upon a sick-bed, left to die or get well according as the tender mercies of others, besides the employer may or may not find him out:—a comparison of these with the Southern slave, moderately laboring during day-light, and left to his nine or ten hours sleep at night, well clad, well fed, well nursed in sickness, kindly treated in health, whistling, shouting, singing, laughing for very freedom from care, furnished with a decent and comfortable house of worship, to which he may resort for religious instruction on Sabbath;—such a comparison will doubtless show that there are things in this world a little worse than even Southern slavery. It is therefore well that as Dr. Cumming, and others like him, are awake to the existence of such evils in their own community, although even he occasionally gives a fling at the *peculiar institution*. This, however, is natural, considering that he has no knowledge of the real practical working of the system, and has derived the stock of information he possesses from partizan publications and mere hearsay. The object of the Doctor in this lecture seems to be to plead with employers for less oppressive and exacting labor as regards their operatives. His plan contemplates, also, a judicious allowance of weekly holidays of a half day at a time, (on Saturdays,) and, in addition to this, “the first day of each of the months—April, May, June, July, August and September”—as holidays. He speaks plainly and earnestly on this subject. “Recreation is essential to health, to spirits, and to the vital energy of youth.” Again: “No young man, let me say, with the deepest demand for labor—fair labor, and, if you like, hard labor—is warranted to sell his life absolutely to a shop; and no employer is warranted in urging or exacting the same.”

By a natural transition he discusses the Sabbath question under the head of *Rest*, showing that when by the system which exacts all the time of the clerk mechanic, or needle woman, or factory operative, they are deprived of the legitimate time for rest and recreation, they will become almost inevitably Sabbath-desecrators. He takes occasion to set forth

the Divine authority and perpetual obligation of the day; and he clearly shows that the change of the day from the seventh to the first day of the week, in no wise interferes with the obligation of the commandment. "The moral duty of hallowing the Sabbath is absolute; the time when it is kept is, and must be, varied with the longitude and latitude of the place. Nay," adds the Doctor, "the law was given on Mount Sinai. Now, what is Saturday or the seventh day at Mount Sinai, is probably Sunday or the first day in the metropolis of England; and, if so, this seventh day, instituted in the desert, would actually be most literally hallowed on the first day that we observe in London at this present moment." He not only shows thus that in the very nature of the case a change of the day was a thing that might most probably occur, and that it was thus left open apparently on purpose that it might be changed; but he shows first, that in observing the first day we imitate the example of Christ, who, after His resurrection, (the event which is *now* chiefly commemorated by the day,) he met "the Apostles, and appeared in the midst of them on no other day than the first day of the week;" and the same fact is established by St. Paul, and by the Fathers, whose authority is certainly good, "as witnesses of the facts of their own era," whatever may be said (and justly said) of them "as interpreters of the Bible." He pleads for its observance not more on the ground of duty than on that of privilege and enjoyment. "It is the gift, not the demand of God." "The Christian Sabbath seems to me a green island struck off from the great continent of Heaven, lying green, fragrant, beautiful, amid the rushing currents and roaring cataracts of time, standing upon which green and fragrant isle, we can catch from afar the sheen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and hear unspent in their transit the songs and melodies of celestial choirs." He says "a Christian not only will not work, or read the secular newspaper, or study works of art and science on Sunday, but he has neither time nor taste for them." He condemns the newspaper which is called the *Sunday paper*, because it is really "the reflection of *secular subjects on that day*," and because "it perpetuates on the Sunday the currents that have run deep

in the channels of the heart for six days, and thus destroys the peculiar rest of Sunday."

We give one more brief extract:

"Do not indicate what is so erroneous—the idea that Sunday is a day of gloom. It is a festival, not a fast—it is an interlude of bright sunshine, not a day of thick darkness. Let me remind you the provinces are looking to London. A blow struck here will reverberate through the length and breadth of our land. And I earnestly pray to God that you all may have, while you live, a fair day's work and a fair day's pay; and yet more earnestly do I pray, that you may have a Sabbath day's rest and a Sabbath day's spirit upon earth, and a Sabbath day glory and refreshment where things seen and temporal are merged in things unseen and eternal"

This lecture shows clearly one thing; that no matter what may be the topic selected, the discussion is invariably found to bear upon some great point in Christian morals. And this is characteristic of all of these lectures.

It is worthy of remark, that the sanctification of the Christian Sabbath is occupying with great power the attention of the great minds of the Church at the present day. And no one can fail to see, at a single glance, over the moral aspect of our own country, that one of our national sins is Sabbath desecration. But a few years ago we heard and read much of Sabbath Conventions, and Christian hearts, long grieved to see how the day was polluted, rejoiced to hope that, by means of these Conventions, a new and healthful tone would be given to public sentiment on this subject. But where do we behold any of the blessed results that were so fondly anticipated? What Railroad Company in the South, and especially of the South-West, stops the engine on the Sabbath? How painful to a mind sensitive to God's claims on the day, to be compelled to listen to the discordant steam whistle, as the train dashes through the villages, and past the homesteads of the land, destroying the peaceful tranquillity of holy time, and gathering at the depot a greater crowd often than is found in the house of God! What steam-boat regards the sanctity of the Sabbath? In May, 1858, about 100 of the Commissioners to the General Assembly, finding that Saturday night would overtake them some four hundred miles above New Orleans, and that the alterna-

tive was to leave the boat and incur the risk of losing the opening services of the Assembly by waiting for another boat, or violating the Sabbath, actually had to pay the captain \$500 to lie by until Monday! All honor to the men and to the church in which they were trained—or rather thanks be to God who put into the hearts of these honored brethren to count gold and silver as trash in the comparison with the sanctity of the Sabbath! It is a matter of gratitude to God furthermore, that we were born and reared in the bosom of that old church, whose history, in all ages of her existence, has shown her to be alive to the honor of God in the sanctification of the Sabbath. Nevertheless, such evidences of obedience to the fourth commandment are but few and scattered. Our men of business make it a day of convenience, and save a day by travelling on Sabbath. Our mail coaches roll along the highway in defiance of the Lord of the Sabbath. Our post-offices are opened, and mails distributed, as on other days. Our streets are filled with children and servants; and citizens of respectability throng the squares and marts of commerce, hearing and repeating the news of the day, as on other days. None of us have yet forgotten the action of our National Legislature in relation to the Sunday mail memorial. Christians by thousands petitioned and entreated the Government to suspend the transportation of the mails on the Sabbath, and these petitions were rejected, and the country resounded with the exultation of thousands over this defeat of priestcraft, as it was elegantly termed. It was a heaven-daring and God-provoking measure, and stamped upon our National escutcheon the dark stigma, that we are a nation of Sabbath-desecrators.

The next one of these lectures which we shall notice, is one by Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, on the somewhat singular topic of "*Ragged Schools*." The introductory remarks are so fine, and so interesting, that we shall offer no apology for quoting them. They derive their appropriateness from their showing the origin of this system of Ragged Schools; but the bearing they have upon Christian obligations to engage in the general enterprizes of usefulness, which offer on every hand, will be sufficiently apparent. Furthermore, he tells the story to show

how he came to be so earnestly and prominently engaged in pleading and serving the cause of Ragged Schools, as he has been for some years past in Scotland. Says he:

"My first interest in that subject was awakened by a picture. It represented a cobbler's room; he was there himself, spectacles on nose, an old shoe between his knees; that massive forehead and firm mouth indicating great determination of character; and from beneath his bushy eyebrows benevolence gleamed out on a group of poor children—some sitting, some standing, but all busy at their lessons around the busy cobbler. Interested by this scene, we turned from the picture to the inscription below, and with growing wonder read how this man, John Pounds by name, by trade a cobbler, in Portsmouth, had taken pity on the ragged children, whom ministers and magistrates, ladies and gentlemen, were leaving to run wild, and go to ruin on their streets; how, like a good shepherd, he had gone forth to gather in these outcasts; how he had trained them up in virtue and knowledge; and how, looking for no fame, no recompense, no reward from man, he, single handed, while earning his daily bread by the sweat of his face, had, ere he died, rescued from ruin, and saved to society, no fewer than *five hundred children!*"

He tells us that the result was to humble him, and to make him ashamed of himself. He "stood reproved for the little he had done, and astonished at this man's achievement." He turned his attention at once to the subject of "Ragged Schools." And for seven years of his life moved "among the poorest of the poor, and the worst of the bad;" he explored the homes and histories of such unhappy children as he found in the streets, and brought them into the asylums provided for them by the benevolent; and, at the time of the delivery of the lecture, there were three hundred of those children, some of whom had been found with both parents dead, others without father, and others without mother, some deserted by both parents, some with both parents transported, some again motherless with drunken father, some fatherless with drunken mother, others with both parents worthless, others who had been beggars, fifty-two who had been in the police-office, eight in jail, sixty-two who had been children of thieves, &c., &c. And, in final statements of the results of these efforts of the humane, he says:

"We have by our own efforts, and God's blessing, turned into useful

citizens more than three hundred children, at an expense of £6,000 (\$30,000), who would as criminals, when the State was done with them, have cost her nearly £100,000 (\$500,000). Even on the low ground of pounds, shillings and pence, these schools claim the public support; but when you think of the vices and miseries from which these children are rescued—the virtues and blessings, present and future, temporal and eternal, to which our schools are their introduction, their value is beyond figures to calculate, or language to express.”

He contends with noble earnestness, and burning eloquence, that Jeremy Bentham’s apothegm, “the poor would need less charity if they got more justice,” is true. For, he says, that oftentimes when “a poor, shirtless, shoeless, starved, untaught and uncared for creature, whose head hardly reaches the bar, and who has to be set upon it, that the twelve grave jurymen may see the object of legal vengeance, is tried and condemned, according to forms of law, the whole scene revolts us.” He is not for permitting crime to go unpunished, but he wants the real criminal; and he thinks that it will turn out to be either “that hard and scowling ruffian, or that woman who sits with bloated face, watching the proceedings—the father or mother who compelled their child to steal;” or you may find the real criminal “among the guardians of the poor, the priests of religion, the ministers of state, your senators, your fat and well-fed citizens, your ladies and gentlemen, who saw that child lying in the gutter perishing before their eyes, nor made one effort.” No doubt it is true, as Dr. Guthrie intimates, that this neglect arises more frequently from want of thought than from want of humanity. And truthfully does he, as did Dr. Cumming, administer a merited rebuke to his own land for going in search of objects of charity abroad, while such revolting miseries are staring her in the face from every hand at home.

“While Britain rises in her colossal might to stretch one arm across the Atlantic, that she may break the chain of the slave, and another across Europe, that she may break the yoke of the despot, let us reclaim our outcasts at home—no longer give the slaveholders of the West, and the tyrant of the East, occasion to sneer at our inconsistency, to sting us with the speech, ‘Physician, heal thyself.’ How men and women, of otherwise refined feelings and true benevolence, can daily walk unmoved amidst these glaring evils around them, and never reach

a hand to help, is told by no one so touchingly as by the author of "The Song of the Shirt:"

"But evil is wrought by want of thought
As well as want of heart."

The limit prescribed to ourselves in making extracts from these lectures, will have been reached when we shall have given the following from the close of Mr. Punshon's lecture on "The Prophet of Horeb, his life and lessons:"

"I have only one fitness to address you; but it is one which many of your lecturers cannot claim, and that is a fitness of sympathy. Your hopes are mine; with your joys at their keenest, I can sympathize. I have not forgotten the glad hours of opening morning, when the zephyr has a balmier breath, and through the richly painted windows of the fancy the sun-light streams in upon the soul. I come to you as one of yourselves. Take my counsel. My heart's desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved. There is hope for the future. The world is moving on. The great and common mind of humanity has caught the charm of hallowed labor. . . . Excelsior! Excelsior! Brothers, let us speed onward the youth who holds that banner. Up, up brave spirit!

'Climb the steep and starry road
To the Infinite's abode!'

Up, up brave spirit! Spite of Alpine steep and frowning brow—roaring blast and crashing flood—up! Science has many glowing secrets to reveal to thee; Faith has many a Tabor-pleasure to inspire. Ha! does the cloud stop thy progress? Pierce through it to the sacred morning. Fear not to approach the Divinity—it is His own longing which impels thee. Thou art speeding to thy coronation, brave spirit! Up, up brave spirit! till as thou pantest on the crest of thy loftiest achievement, God's glory shall burst upon thy face, and God's voice, blessing thee from His throne in tones of approval and of welcome, shall deliver the guerdon: 'I have made thee a little lower than the angels, and crowned thee with glory and honor!'"

With these pleasant and useful volumes we have now done, commending them once more as containing models according to our ideas of the sort of lectures that is fitted to be profitable as well as entertaining to an audience of young men. Our young men! There is surely no class possessing more multiplied or powerful claims to our deep and tender interest as Christian patriots! Not that men are to be regarded as beyond the reach of admonition, counsel or restraint, or are in-

capable of being influenced by motives drawn from high moral sources, merely because they are no longer young; but still, if called upon to decide which of all classes is most important and precious, we must at once pronounce that the young men of our country constitute that class. We repeat, no disrespect for other classes further advanced is meant by this discrimination. Such should remember that there are no elements of importance or value in youth which they did not possess to the fullest extent. They were themselves once young. Once parents, preceptors, ministers and friends, regarded them as the chief objects of solicitude, prayers and tears. For them a mother wept, a father prayed, a minister counselled, and a host of tender, pious friends, concentrated all their most anxious anticipations upon them and their destiny. But that day is past. They have lived to fulfil the promise of their youth, or to blast the expectations it excited. They have survived to realize the anxious anticipations, and to stand as the answer to the fervent prayers offered in their behalf, or to shroud in mourning the blighted hopes indulged—to prove a blessing to the world, or a curse to the age. Whatever they are, one thing is certain, their earthly career has been marked out, their position in society has long since been taken, if they have arrived at middle life. Hence, as regards such, the time of preparation is over. The Spring-time of life—its precious seed time is gone forever. “What is writ is writ.” And, in almost every case, the character they now bear is established forever. Habits are fixed, plans are developed, associations formed, ties woven around them which will, in all probability, continue to govern, direct, influence and bind them, for the remaining term of their natural lives. But furthermore, which is of vastly greater interest to them, those influences under which they now find themselves, having moulded their characters to this late period of their temporal existence, they will doubtless exert a greater or less power to stamp upon them the ineffaceable features of their characters and destiny for eternity. It is therefore not so important that this class should be vigilantly and constantly admonished, since they have had experience added to the monitions of wisdom and pious affection which

were bestowed upon them in the days of youth, and these have, perhaps, been blessed to the formation of a virtuous character here, and the promise and assurance of a high and holy destiny hereafter. But if not, then it is not so promising an enterprize to follow them with admonition, since all early efforts having been fruitless and disregarded, the seal may be set to their destiny.

But not so with young men. They stand on ground once occupied by their seniors. The habits of even the most advanced of those properly styled young men are not yet formed with such inflexible inveteracy as to forbid the idea of change. The plans of the majority are, as yet, undeveloped; their associations are not yet determinately formed; the ties of life indissoluble by any cause less powerful than death, have not yet thrown their bonds around them. Hence the importance of youth as a season of preparation for future life. There are combined in this age all the elements of hope, and around the young men of our land cluster thickly the swelling germs of promise, indicating the possibility of a glorious and useful manhood, and a serene and happy and honored old age. And here, too, it must not be disguised, are the undoubted capabilities implanted within each bosom, which, under improper training, or total neglect, may grow to a maturity of fearful power to desolate and curse the world. Were the future of our young men to be terminated by the limits of this brief state of existence, even then every consideration connected with their own and their country's happiness, honor and prosperity, would concur to render this period, of all others, the most important and interesting. But when to this earthly career we add, that these are not mortal beings, to pass away with other created objects around them—that they are beings whose lives are to run parallel with the years of the eternal God, then is the period—the young man's period of life—invested with an interest and importance incalculable and supreme.

A number of considerations, showing this to be true, occur to the mind at once. Its importance as a period of life is easily shown from the fact, that it is then that the mind is most impres-

sible. It is so of man's physique, easily affected by disease—easily affected by remedial agencies, resorted to in order to counteract disease. The mind takes the complexion of the associations, the books, the places with which the youth is most familiar. He will be impressed by every influence he encounters by day or by night. Insensible he may be of this at the time, nevertheless it is true; and every man he meets in conversation, and with whom he interchanges sentiments, leaves an impression upon his mind. We are told that every casual or purposed blow inflicted upon our globe, is communicated to the mass. So with this moving enginery of intellect which fills the world—no effort it puts forth is lost; but, coming in contact with some department of the great whole, impresses upon it some influence that is felt. This impressibility of youth has been strikingly likened to softened wax, on which any desired stamp may be fixed. But the attempt to make the impression must be quick, or the golden opportunity may be lost forever. The cold and hardened wax may be shattered into a thousand fragments, but no image can ever be made upon it. So, when the hardening process, through which the mind passes in its career through the congealing atmosphere of a wicked world, has destroyed its impressible quality, vainly may we attempt to produce results which once might have fallen in with the mind's own choice. And because it is true that the *mind* is then most impressible, it is of the last importance to have this period of life most sedulously guarded, and most faithfully warned. Because there is an intimate and indissoluble connection between the intellectual and moral nature of man. Just as the mind is impressed, the affections and the habits which go to make up character are moulded and directed. We all have our own theory of morals, and this is the result of the operations of the intellect reasoning, comparing and combining together the various principles inculcated by the influences surrounding us. Whatever, therefore, may be the theory of morals elaborated by the mind, such will be the moral sentiments of the heart, controlling the affections and constructing the character. Add to this that well-known fact, that impressions made in youth surpass in durability all others

made at any subsequent period. If it were not so—if, while the mind is confessedly impressible to a wonderful degree in youth, the impressions were as evanescent as they are easily made, then its impressibility would be a feature of little worth in the estimate of the importance of this period of life. But we all know that the impressions made are not like foot-prints on the "desert strand," to be erased by the first wave that washes over it; nor like the furrow in the wave from passing keel; nor like the wound inflicted upon the air by the bird's rapid wing. In a life time the mind receives countless impressions; and those of later life may cover up and bury those of youth. But the mind is not like a palimpsest; it is not like one of those ancient parchments from which one writing has been erased in order to make way for another. It is rather like one of those medallions, on which a picture has been deeply ingrained into the substance of the material, and the artist must first cover the picture with a coat of paint before he can produce another. Very little effort is requisite to erase the later figure, and underneath this thin covering the first is brought out in all its original brilliancy of coloring and faithfulness in limning. So the mind of the young man. Whatever stamp his associations may have given it, remains ineradicable. All subsequent impressions may be erased, but these will remain forever.

But these considerations must not be confined in their influence to the young men themselves. For though they show how important to them it is that they should be rightly trained and directed at this period, they may be viewed as equally important when young men are regarded in connection with society, of which they must soon become the controlling spirits. Devoid of wisdom would that man be who, in the hope and expectation of propagating an orchard of fine fruits, or a vineyard of choice grapes, should rely solely upon the present growing trees and vines, without making provision for the culture and training of scions, shoots and cuttings, to supply the place of those which shall soon decay and die. It would, however, be a far more unwise system in any philanthropist, any lover of his race, to regard the matured and acting portion of

the generation of men as the sole objects of care and consideration; to look to them as the depositories of all the hopes and prospects of the human race. On the contrary, when we remember that soon the incumbents of place and power, parents, guardians, ministers, instructors, the rulers of the land, the curators of health, the administrators of justice, the legislators and magistrates, must pass away from the scene of action here to their account at the bar of God, a very slight reflection will recall the simple fact, that no other individuals on earth can be their successors in these solemnly responsible stations, save the dear young men of the rising generation. If, then, those of us who are every day reminded by the lengthened shadows of time, that our sun of life is waxing nearer and nearer its setting, overlook this truth, we are derelict in duty in the sight of God. We may not "lay the flattering unction to our souls" when approaching the bar of Eternal Justice, that we have discharged our whole duty to our race, even should it be true of us that we have filled the lot assigned us, usefully and honorably. This will not suffice. The solemn inquiry will be instituted, what provision did you make for perpetuating the good influences you had set in motion during your life? Whom did you leave as your successors in the work which you had begun? *Successors* there will be. The work of the world will be carried on by some human agency. And if the young men of the land be neglected and forgotten, the great interests of society must fall into hands unqualified and unequal to the high responsibility, far more likely to exert an influence for evil than for good. Hence the importance of earnest, constant, vigilant, kindly and affectionate attention to the young men of the land. These are the hope or despair of the world; its glory or its shame; its pride or its mortification; its salvation or its destruction. They must do the work begun by their fathers, and perpetuate the influences which they set in motion, if good; and, if bad, they must be prepared to counteract them. They must be makers of laws, and the executives to enforce them. They must preach the Gospel, judge the people, watch by the bedside of suffering humanity. Young men, then, it is clear,

stand in the front rank of importance as a class of organized society.

These truths being patent upon the surface of the subject, he who can gain the ears and the hearts of the young men of this age is thus furnished with vantage ground for effecting great good to the world. He should feel called upon to impress the mind of every young man with the great truth that he himself, individually, has a task set him by the great Creator, which he is to perform with his might, and which he is to neglect at his peril. If it be true, as has been long said, that nothing was created without a purpose, surely when we apply this principle to the higher department of being—rational creation—it cannot but be true that every man has an appointed mission, which he must fulfil. No Epicurean philosophers are we, holding to the creed that Providence dwells aloof from human affairs, and allows the world to manage itself. Far from it. God's hand is in every thing, and His eye is upon every thing. From all eternity He hath determined the times and seasons, and fixed the lot of every man. His mission is appointed, and for its successful fulfilment all natural qualifications are furnished, and the arrangements and occurrences around him constitute the means and appliances, by the use of which he is to perfect his natural endowments, and thus fit himself for his chief life-work. What that is, may be hidden sometimes in obscurity, so that it is difficult for a man to ascertain fully and clearly what God would have us do. But the clouds gradually disperse, and there is, in the end, a fair and open manifestation of God's will to every man who will watch the gradual developments of Providence. It is sometimes the case that a man's inclination may lead him in one direction, while circumstances clearly and unequivocally direct him to another sphere of effort. Under such circumstances, woe to that man who resists such clearly expressed indications of the will of God, just because his inclinations, his indolence, or what he conceives to be his interest, suggest it to him. Men should learn a lesson on this subject from the record of the Prophet Jonah's career. God found him fleeing from his ap-

pointed mission on the bosom of the deep, and at His command the winds and the waves roused themselves into a tempest to swallow up the disobedient Prophet, and through marvellous incidents of peril and preservation, he was brought back to his prescribed field of action.

If this doctrine could be wrought with the power of a settled conviction upon every young man's heart, the influence would surely be to cause every energy of soul to converge to the fulfilment of the ordained work. Coincident with this has been the history of every man whose life, sublime in its great results, has been enbalméd in memory, and blessed the world. Slowly, it may be, was the outline of his career developed before him; but there was this peculiarity about such men, that there was no respite of labor with them. Such men were never, at any time, idlers or triflers. Even in occupations not apparently directly bearing upon their final mission, whatsoever their hands found to do, they did it with their might. Always toiling and devoting their powers to that field of effort immediately before and around them, they never sat down in dreamy castle-building as to the future. But the present duty was the matter that engaged them, and to that they addressed themselves with a determined purpose to do that duty well. Accordingly in the end it was found that this pursuit, though not immediately and sensibly connected with their ultimate work, proved to be the most effective preparation for its successful prosecution.

The most eminent example in history illustrative of this position, is that of Martin Luther. Beautifully, though briefly, does Punshon comment on the life of this great man. His first object was the acquisition of knowledge, with no reference to its great end—Truth. He had no dream when chanting in the hours of recreation in the streets of Magdeburg for bread, nor even in the College of Eisenach, nor when a student at Erfurt, nor "when he had a University for his admirer," and when the most confident predictions were uttered as to his future success, that he would ever seize the strong holds of the Papacy, and shake them to their base. His next object was the attainment

of truth. The accidental discovery of a Bible in the old library at Erfurt, had awakened in him the anxious question: "What is truth?" and to the discovery of the answer he bent every energy of soul and body. And yet the discovery of truth was not the fore-ordained and final mission of Luther; it was but a step in that direction, preparatory to the work to which God had called him. Nor did Luther imagine for a moment that God had called him to reform the corrupt Church of Rome, or to unbind the fetters of spiritual despotism from the people, when in the pursuit of truth we find him at that stage of his progress "foregoing all his brilliant prospects; parting, without a sigh, with academical distinction; taking monastic vows in an Augustine convent; becoming the watchman and sweeper of the place; wasting himself with voluntary penances well nigh to the grave; studying the fathers intensely, but getting no light; poring over the Bible itself with scales upon his eyes; catching a dim streak of auroral brightness, but leaving Erfurt before the dawn, until at last, in his cell at Wittenberg, on his bed of languishing at Bologna, and finally at Rome, Pilate's question answered on Pilate's stairs—there comes the thrice-repeated Gospel whisper, 'the just shall live by faith;' and the glad Evangel scatters the darkening and shreds off the paralysis, and he rises into moral freedom a new man unto the Lord."

And yet while Luther was thus accomplishing all this for himself, he was not only unconscious of the purpose for which he was set apart by God, but all this even was simply preparatory. Still he was doing God's will even in this. Thus by hard mental toil, and moral discipline, he found himself qualified and strengthened when the time came, to enter upon his work of Reformation. It was thus he amassed the exhaustless magazine of moral power and resources which made him valiant in the face of rank, place and wealth, and hoary abuses and corruption, threatening to crush him; incorruptible when the attempt was made to bribe him; unterrified by the dreadful fate of Huss; and which conducted him along by the power and protection of God, to the glorious triumph of truth he was

graciously permitted to behold and share, and which makes the name of Martin Luther still

“A watchword such as ne’er

Shall fall to earth while there’s an echo left to air!”

Now, what was Luther’s secret of power? Just that he was in earnest in all that he did, and had an end in view in every thing he undertook, worthy of the vast industry which marked his career.

To such truths let our young men be pointed, and to the lives of such men let their minds be directed. All that we have said here about stimulating our young men to energetic application of their powers and endowments to the matter before them, is based upon the established truth that nothing else will make true men of them—*men for the times*. We wish them awakened to moral earnestness in the mighty concerns of life. We would rescue them from the influence of indolence and fashionable folly. We would have them elevated above the grade of butterflies—to realize that they have to encounter the stern, uncompromising responsibilities that are resting on them towards their race and towards God. We are fallen on troublous times. They are just such times as demand of us—of every educated man—of every young man especially—to study with the utmost anxiety and earnestness the will of God, in reference to our future. Men of middle life have attained that stage in their progress when it is no longer doubtful what the channel may be in which their influence must flow. Their mission is perhaps chosen, and they may be engaged in working in their lot. Some are doing good service for God and man. And many, alas! too many, are working only evil, and that continually. Had we the power and privilege of reaching the ear of every young man in the land, we would entreat them to pause for a moment and survey the phenomena of society around them—arrest the flowing tide of youthful pleasure for a moment, and mark “the signs of the times.”

It is true that many are wont to dilate upon the pre-eminent glories of modern civilization with rapturous exultation. And

it is not denied that it is a period in the world's history of wonderful progress, and that there is much in what we observe that is favorable and encouraging to the lover of man. But blinded, indeed, must he be by his enthusiasm, who fails to discern amid all that is bright and glorious, much that is alarming and perilous. Liberty, it is true, is everywhere diffusing her blessings among mankind. But we have only to turn our thoughts to this land of liberty, to be convinced that there is imminent danger of its degenerating into licentiousness. It is the glory of this age that the march of intellect is onward, and its achievements splendid. But there is no small reason to fear, that our extraordinary devotion to mental culture may result in Rationalism and Infidelity. We are glorying in the diffusion of liberal principles on the subject of religion, and the result is, in many parts of our land—Indifferentism. The cross of our Lord and Master never before achieved such conquests as it has in these ends of the world; and the past year will be memorable as the year of the great American Revival. And yet, perhaps, crime was never known to stalk through the land with strides so gigantic and unchecked, as now. Human life is comparatively of no value in our country. You may count with almost as much certainty, when opening the public journals from our large cities, upon reading the horrible details of some Burdell murder, or Bill Poole slaughter in a boxing match, or the narrative of some foul assassination occurring in the house of her whose door is the gate of hell, as you may upon the regular price-current of the market. Nor would this state of things be so alarming and disheartening, were there a fair field open for the operation of justice in the punishment of criminals. But how is it? Why, when a murder is committed, the first stage through which the public mind passes is that of violent indignation, which can with difficulty be restrained from summary vengeance. Then when the murderer is secured in prison, there is a gradual settling down into a state of indifference to the whole matter; and lastly, there succeeds to all this, gentle relentings of pity for the poor prisoner, followed up by bailing him out on account of his health. Then comes forfeiture of bail, and escape by flight,

or a petition for pardon, signed by the very men who were once filled with virtuous indignation, and granted without hesitation by the lenient executive.

Such reflections are not so foreign to the matter in hand as at first view might appear. It is because we fear that the generation which is now about to pass away, is too much fixed in their habits of thought and feeling to admit of much hope of the reform of those evils, that our thoughts and hopes are centred upon the young and rising men of the age. We earnestly desire to see a generation which will give promise of better things than the present. Hence we hail the tendency which seems to prevail in our day, to the bestowal of special attention upon the young men of the land, as a hopeful omen for good. Special services for their benefit cannot but act happily upon them. Let Christian Associations of young men be formed in all our cities, and towns, and villages, wherever it is possible. Let our young men be addressed by men of the right stamp; let them be told constantly of the immense burden of responsibility that is imposed upon them, in connection with the future; let them be girded for the great conflict of the coming age. *The times call for men.* None others are wanted. The tribe of reformers which has been at work upon society have proved the empiricism of their pretensions. The system of statesmanship in our country is effete, and its fatuity is sufficiently demonstrated in the evils which flow from its legislation. He who would win the guerdon of honor from a grateful country, and better than all that, the approval of Heaven, must stand up for the principles of truth and justice revealed in God's Word, without regard to party dictation, or the maxims of the world of fashion, and the cry of expediency.

Whatever agency may be found possessed of the inherent energy to influence the present race of young men, so to begin their career as to war against error, and battle for truth without compromise, will be the instrumentality for the reform of society. Have *them* rightly trained, and the world will be in good hands.

There is but one system which will give power and success to any such agency. That is the Divine religion of Jesus.

And it is only as this system pervades a given agency, that it is worthy of recommendation, or calculated to inspire hope. And it must be distinctly understood, that while earnestly advocating the encouragement of a judicious lecture system, we only regard it at its best estate as preparatory and inductive to the higher system of pulpit instruction. Among the young men of our crowded cities and popular rural districts, there is so wide a diversity of character and taste, that many may be attracted by a system which addresses itself to them in a form familiar and interesting, apart from the grave and solemn prestige of pulpit ministrations, who would, perhaps, not be reached so readily by the preacher. Our hope, however, would be, that such a class might be led, by a proper lecture system, to appreciate and desire something still higher and better, while the influence of the system upon Christian young men would be to strengthen in them their purposes for good, and keep them mindful of sacred truths, inculcated from holier sources.

For, after all, the hope of any good to this world must be found to rest in the Gospel which, while it is "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness," is nevertheless "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."*

* On page 272 of this article, the esteemed author inquires: "What Railroad Company in the South stops its engine on the Sabbath?" We are happy to state that we know of some such Companies, and there may be others, although we do not know the fact. We refer to the Greenville and Columbia Railroad Company, the Laurens and Newberry Railroad Company, and the Union and Spartanburg Railroad Company. All these are in South Carolina. The Blue Ridge Railroad Company also, we believe, honors the Sabbath day so far as their Road is yet finished and in use. May they never do otherwise.—[Eds. S. P. R.]