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ARTICLE I.

THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW ON "CHRISTIAN REVIVALS."

The maxim of the wise man, that "there is nothing new under the sun," that, "that which hath been is that which shall be," seems to meet its verification in nothing more clearly than in the ever-recurring cycles of opinion. To a philosophic mind, observing the course of human history, nothing seems more clear than that certain forms of opinion held by men in all recorded ages, are continually disappearing, and being re-produced. As the occasions which give rise to these forms of opinion become more fully developed, and their advocates become overborne by counter testimony or argument, the peculiar phase then assumed by these opinions vanishes and is held in abeyance for a time. But as the world rolls on, and the restless activity of human thought evolves new theories, or new combinations of old theories, the exploded sophism is re-constructed, and made to figure on the arena of discussion, until it is again consigned to its temporary obscurity. As an illus-

tration of the foregoing, we mention the opinion, which is found to have made its appearance in successive periods of all time past, and which is in high career at the present day, viz: that the Christian religion, as understood and embraced by its most devout advocates, is a system of mere fanaticism. Even in those early ages of the true Church, whose bond of love, and whose basis of existence was the faith in a coming Saviour, this religion was so regarded by the infidel scoffers of the antediluvian world. The one unvarying aspect which fixes identity upon this opinion in the midst of all its Protean forms of successive development, is the opposition of the rational religion to the religion of the inner spirit. The mere outer vestment varies, but the body abides permanent. The root and origin of it is thoroughly understood from the inspired teachings of Paul: "the carnal mind is enmity against God." It is this which has been operating since the Fall, to array the intellect of man against a system of Divine doctrine which seeks to bring into captivity all the man, in his threefold capacity, body, soul and spirit. The latent innate depravity of man finds a congenial theatre for the full gratification of its hostility to God, in the cultivation of an intellectual religion instead of that which takes hold of the heart. In this system there is sometimes a formal acknowledgment of God, and sometimes even that is withheld. But whatsoever the endlessly varied forms it may present, the contest is one that never ceases between the rational and the true spiritual system of religion. Nor must we be understood to admit, that in the true idea of Christianity, reason is not concerned. On the contrary, it is distinctly maintained that the religion of Christ is as well adapted to man's reason as to his heart; that its conquest over the man is an entire and absolute conquest, and that its rule in man is as cordially welcome to the intellect as to the feelings. Let those who will distinguish between the "theology of the intellect and the theology of the feel-

ings"; but as for us, who belong to the old school, there is no theology of the one which is not for the other as well. If it be a true theology, whatever in it is addressed to the intellect is no less calculated to affect the feelings, and that which brings the feelings into subjection equally commends itself to the intellect. Nevertheless, this is the ground which the enemies of a true and simple faith have ever assumed; that there is a legitimate and "irrepressible conflict" between the religion of reason and the religion of the heart; that the former is the true elevating and refining system, which will prevail as *knowledge* advances, while the last is the religion of the weak and ignorant—the emotional and unintellectual.

The foregoing thoughts have been excited, and their expression has been elicited, by the perusal of an article in the "Westminster Review," which, purporting to be a notice of no less than fourteen different works, more or less touching upon the subject of the various phenomena of religious excitement, is, in reality, a skilfully masked infidel attack upon the spiritual religion of the Bible. Christianity is not now for the first time to acknowledge her obligations to this periodical for notices of her progress, and for comments upon the outer developments of her inner life, which have been to the last degree unfriendly. This is the Review in whose pages it was not long since set forth, that the Missions of the Christian Church had all proved a failure; and now we are presented with an article of like import, to prove that what are known as Christian Revivals, have always been, and are specially, in their more recent manifestation, a failure; or at any rate, that so far as being a genuine work of renewal upon the soul, they are spurious, and utterly undeserving the interest of any well educated mind. No occasion is allowed by this Quarterly to slip, which may be used to wage war upon religion, the religion of Christ. In the conduct of the war, means are unscrupulously adopted which would be regarded as utterly un-

warranted in any honorable contest. In this case, however, it is regarded as legitimate to bring everything available to bear upon the great enterprise of overthrowing the religion of Christ. It is not the less reprehensible in these Reviewers that they fight in disguise. Professedly, the writer on Revivals seems to advocate some religion—to have some respect for the Bible—but pleads for “a process of simplification” in the interpretation of the Sacred Word, and hopes and believes that “the labors of Biblical criticism will have to be extended, and their results diffused before the genuine ore of Christ’s teaching can be wholly separated from the dross of superstition and Scriptural corruptions with which it is still combined.” What this author’s ideas are, in regard to the superstition and Scriptural corruptions which he says are still combined with the pure ore of Christ’s teaching, will appear not only from a careful perusal of his article, but from the assumptions with which he sets out. With an air of oracular authority he speaks of “the doctrine of eternal punishment,” “the theory of a sacrificial atonement,” “the authority of the Old Testament, and by consequence, the doctrine of the fall of man, and the obligation of Sabbath observance,” as “spurious accretions of Christianity,” now rejected and repudiated by “distinguished Biblical scholars,” and therefore no longer to be considered as articles of a pure faith. He even goes so far as to say that the latter part of the sixteenth chapter of the gospel by Mark, (viz: “he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned,”) is believed by competent judges to form no part of the original text.

One expression of this writer gives us a clue to his real sentiment. He says:

“The poor and illiterate have neither the time nor the power, adequately to examine the history and doctrinal developments of Christianity for themselves. In treating of Christian revivals, therefore, which are confined almost exclusively to these classes, we are

not concerned with the ideal Christianity of philosophers and scholars, but with the actual Christianity as commonly professed and practised by the great body of the Christian world."

As to what he means by "the ideal Christianity of philosophers and scholars," we confess ourselves somewhat in doubt. If the word is used by him here in its occasional acceptation, then it means no Christianity at all. But it is rather to be gathered from the drift and tenor of his article that he means a form of Christianity which rises free and unfettered above the trammels of the Bible, as the great body of the Christian world interprets it. And we think that his closing paragraphs will sufficiently manifest this to be his meaning:

"Equally remote from lazy inaction and morbid excitement is that equable and harmonious exertion of intellect and feeling, which, being entirely compatible with a healthily sustained activity, best exemplifies the true practical religion and the true happiness of man. Ever striving to advance from point to point, he is never satisfied except when, conjecturing new excellencies and discoveries from the vantage-ground of prior attainment, he feels conscious of rising higher and higher in the scale, devising new means to accomplish new ends. His faculties, utterly disproportioned to merely supplying material wants, are infinite in their range; his reason pursues knowledge with self-sacrificing enthusiasm, far beyond the seeming limits of utilitarian advantage, while his imagination and feelings are equally disinterested and boundless. Moreover, that vital essence of our personality—our freedom—without which we should be the helpless sport of nature's mechanism, with no rational motive to exercise our thoughts, and nothing that we could truly call our own, though necessarily limited as it is, is yet susceptible of indefinite extension; for, consisting not of lawless caprice, but of intelligent submission to known conditions, its essence is knowledge—knowledge ever tending to become wider and more perfect. Instinctively felt, and inherent in the very nature of man, the object of an obscure faith, long before it became a philosophical conviction, the idea of human progress and perfectibility may now be said to be the recognized assurance of the scientific intellect; that which was once only a bright reversion in the skies, or a transcendental ideal in the oracles of the priests and the fantastic representations of the poets, has now been practically realized, and eloquently proclaimed by the best and wisest of mankind. And this progress and perfectibility are not restricted to the domain of intellect, but extend to our moral nature, which, when freed from the withering influence of terror, by which it has ever been

oppressed, will assert its inherent dignity and beauty, and its own sufficiency, as the impelling motive of heroic action, as well as an adequate security for the constant presence of justice and generosity in the ordinary transactions of daily life. Under the guidance of the cultivated intellect, each moral action will register itself by a corresponding increase of the moral nature, which, organically enlarged and strengthened, will dominate existence and render moral conduct so habitual as to become seemingly instinctive and necessary; and thus by a spiritual discipline, the rules of which are inscribed alike in our intellectual and moral being by the Supreme Law-Giver himself, we shall be best prepared to enter, without

‘the dread of something after death—
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.’”

It is not difficult to discover from this extract, collated with the assumptions of the introduction, what the religious system of this writer is. And the long extract has been given in order that it might be presented in his own words, and that all may judge for themselves as to its essential nature. That there is any Christianity about it, no one can for a moment believe, who understands what is the plain Bible teaching as to that system. For Christianity, as is obvious from the very word, is a system whereof Christ, the Lord, is the sum and substance. His Incarnate life is the record, his words and works are the subject, his doctrines and injunctions give life and energy to the whole. Take these away, then, and what of Christianity is left? Is there one solitary element of the system to be found after it has been subjected to this process of chemico-philosophical analysis? Not one. He begins by speaking approvingly of the lopping away from the teachings of Christ the doctrine of eternal punishment, and of sacrificial atonement, and the repudiation of the old Testament Scriptures, and consequently the fall of man and of Sabbath observance, and he ends by a burst of enthusiasm as regards the true practical religion and happiness of man, making it to consist in the cultivation of the intellect and the enlargement of the moral nature, both of which he obviously considers the unaided work of the man himself, with a com-

plimentary and very slight allusion to the Supreme Law-Giver, who originally inscribed the rules by which man works upon his intellectual and moral nature, and then (as we are to infer) left them to do their work, just as a clock runs its appointed time after having been wound up.

In examining this article, we shall not content ourselves with merely combatting the general position that "*Christian Revivals*" are, as a system, a failure, which is the drift of the author's whole work, but we mean, first of all, to set in their proper light some matters to which he has incidentally alluded as settled principles. We shall hope to be successful in showing that they are not settled as he would have them. The coolness with which he makes assertions as to vital points of Christian doctrine would be startling to one whose faith in these doctrines had always been simple and unquestioning. But we are not now to learn for the first time that it is part of the professional duty of the partizan, who is seeking victory and not truth, to assume as true everything that may promote the interest of his party. This is true in politics, and it is true in Infidelity. We cannot account for the absurdity of certain of this writer's dogmatic declarations, save upon the principle that he is ignorant whereof he affirms, or that he is designedly misrepresenting the truth. If we could feel that he is in the former category, why, then we should charitably go to work and attempt his enlightenment; but as we cannot believe that he is thus an innocent offender, we shall not engage in this discussion in any such hopeless task. In what we may write, therefore, we shall set our utmost limit of hope and expectation to the accomplishment of an humble defence of the truth against a most insidious attack, and a definition of our true position in reference to what constitutes a Christian Revival. We call attention to the following paragraph:

"Simultaneously with the growth of Protestantism, numberless spurious accretions of Christianity, suggested by human folly or duplicity, have been lopped off, and many alledged interpolations and excrescences still clung to by the people as essential parts of the faith, are now rejected by distinguished Biblical scholars."

As this "lopping off" and "rejection" took place "simultaneously with the growth of Protestantism," we might infer that his meaning is that the traditions and superstitions of Rome are now rejected. And to this we have no objection in particular, as a matter of fact. But when, without making the smallest distinction between these things, and some of the doctrines which evangelical Protestants regard as vital to the faith of Christianity, he proceeds to specify the doctrine of "eternal punishment" as discarded by the Rev. F. D. Maurice, late Professor of Theology at King's College; "the theory of sacrificial atonement" repudiated by the Rev. Prof. Jewett, of Oxford; "the authority of the Old Testament, and consequently the doctrine of the fall of man, and Sabbath observance rejected by Rev. Baden Powell; Scripture inspiration renounced by Rev. J. McNaught; and doctrinal religion generally renounced by the Bishop of Hereford," we can no longer doubt that he considers both Popish accretions and Protestant (or rather Bible) essentials alike as specimens of an extinct system, and fossils of a theological period now fast undergoing the burying process by a superincumbent mass of truth. And yet, it seems, according to this writer, the work is not yet done to full satisfaction, as the pure ore of Christ's teaching is not yet wholly separated from superstition and corruption.

In reply to this array of sweeping authority against us, we might ask the question: who are the Rev. Messrs. Maurice, Jewett, Powell, McNaught, and even His Grace, of Hereford, that they should assume, or that their friends in their behalf should assume, that they are to instruct the whole Christian world that it has been, lo! these 1860 years, laboring under a most pernicious superstition and

corruption in believing that the race of man fell in Adam, or that Christ once offered himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice, or that the Old Testament is obsolete in authority, and that the Sabbath is not of perpetual obligation; and, in one sweeping dash, that there is no such thing as an authoritative doctrinal Religion? Who, we repeat the question, are these men? What are the credentials which they can exhibit to overthrow the long-established sway of evangelical opinion, as set forth by the accepted theological teachers of the past and present?

But we call no man master in our creed, and in regard to truth, we make our appeal evermore to the law and to the testimony. And the only point we wish to make in alluding to these remarkable declarations, is to deny that these great truths are in the smallest degree lopped off, rejected or repudiated by the Christian Church. They stand as pillars of the theological temple in every Church on the face of the earth deserving the name of Church of Christ. Not a ray of their heavenly light has been obscured or distorted by any false medium in any one of these Churches. The genuine Baptists, the Methodists in all their divisions, the evangelical Episcopalians, the thirty-five great members of the Presbyterian family, all incorporate these articles in their creed, and their action as Churches, their prayers, their preaching, all set forth, or have inseparably intertwined with them, the great truths which this writer seems so complacently to regard as dead inanities, or corrupt accretions to the true faith. And as to the progressive work of simplification in Biblical criticism, to the results of which he looks forward so hopefully, we may add, that never, at any time in the history of the Church, has the attachment to these great doctrines been so deep and pervading in the hearts of these children of God—in the hearts of the spiritual guides of the people, the authorized teachers of the sacred Word, as well as in the hearts of the people of God themselves, as now. And there is but one

voice heard through all the courts of God's earthly Temple on this subject, and that calls for the Bible, the old Bible, in its ancient purity and unglossed simplicity. We may not stop to demonstrate this truth, and time and space would fail to give the words of the various Confessions of Faith of all these godly companies of the Lord's people, which in their several forms set forth the doctrines here in question. Let it suffice to make the declaration, and to refer to the record which is accessible to the curious who may need confirmation. It is almost a shame for us to trouble the readers of this Review with so many pages of denial of these absurd statements. And the only need for the labor arises from the fact, that its readers are not confined to the class of profound theologians, but that it falls under the eye of many who are not as well versed in the mysteries of infidel strategy and the sources of Christian defence.

This writer is apparently earnest and emphatic on one subject, to which we will now give some attention, and that is, the superhuman difficulties to be overcome by the man who would become "a real Puritan Christian." He divides these difficulties into—1st, Those which arise from the moral precepts of the Bible; 2d, Those which are connected with the doctrines it teaches; and, 3d, Those which present themselves to "the man of secular education, or the student of physical nature," who observes the discrepancy between the facts of the Bible and the facts of science. He states a general preliminary truth in language ingeniously and skilfully selected, and calculated to convey the impression that he entertains a very solemn and deep conviction of Divine truth. Yet, while it may command the respect and ready assent of the superficial reader, the enlightened reason of the intelligent Christian finds in it only the covert announcement of the writer's unbelief in the truth of the matters which he enumerates as difficulties, and the vehicle for the presentation of a mere

sophism. For example: "If the myriads of mankind constituting Christendom really believe that the soul is immortal; that eternal happiness or eternal misery will be allotted to every human being; that the fate of each is dependent on the fulfillment or non-fulfillment on earth of certain prescribed conditions, and that all are in danger of everlasting hell-fire, who have not obtained the assurance of salvation, vouchsafed by the 'Holy Spirit,' it is obvious that no man, woman, or child, ought to rest night or day, so long as that assurance is withheld." And then he quotes from Mr. Angell James, a sentence which is very true in the sense of that good man, and meets a cordial assent from every Christian, but which he quotes to show that the difficulties of coming up to such a standard are super-human, and, as a matter of course, with him, insurmountable. Now, there is in the extract above quoted a considerable amount of truth, accompanying *a sophism*. For, while the great doctrines which he links together here are fully believed and adopted by every one of the many thousands of God's children, and theoretically embraced by many thousands more in Christendom, the fact is, that no one believes the punishment of an eternal hell impends over all who have not attained "*the assurance of this salvation.*" But, in point of fact, what do we find the practical operation of the more solemn truths of the Christian system to be, upon the minds and lives of men? Take for example the great subject of death. Do we not all of us believe that we shall die; that death will end this scene of preparation, and introduce us to the changeless retributions of Eternity? Is there any subject involving in it more tremendous interests to every man, woman and child of the race than this? And yet we do not find that it creates spasmodic excitement, and prevents men from resting day or night. Even Christians, who come as nearly to a realization of the terrible solemnities of death as any other class of men, are not always operated upon by it as this wri-

ter seems to think would naturally be expected if they "really believed, instead of believing that they believed," it to be true. Is it true that men cannot realize eternal truth, in its bearing upon and connection with time, without being thrown into violent mental convulsions, unfitting them for any practical use in this world? Is this the purpose of God's revelation to us? Away with the infidel insinuation! For it is perfectly within the compass of any mind to acquire such a habit of realizing these solemn truths, as to be sensible of their never-ceasing operations upon all the thoughts, words and works; running like golden threads through the whole web of life, ever present, everywhere and at all times supremely influential, and yet to be in a calm, equable, uniform frame, faithfully, usefully and cheerfully discharging the duties of life, without any extraordinary outward manifestations. And if this writer does not know this to be true, it is high time he should examine into the true nature of the religion of Christ, as displayed in the lives of men who, while required and exhorted to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," are expected to be no less "diligent in business," not fanatical and useless. But does it follow from this that men do not believe the doctrines? Not so. These Christians who do not rest "night and day" while this assurance is withheld, are as firmly convinced of the truth of the doctrines as the most enthusiastic devotee can be. They act, too, under the influence of these doctrines, by bringing their whole lives and actions under the constant power of a settled and fixed belief that they must give account to God for their earthly career—they live as those who must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But, then, we are here surrounded by a thousand circumstances which imperiously demand our attention, and to which the Bible itself requires us to attend, and beings who are imperfect in their faculties cannot devote themselves to more things than one at a time. While, therefore, Christians do and must live

under the abiding influence of these great doctrines, so fearful as this writer regards them, still, they need not be evermore in a state of excitement. The truth is, a religion, such as he seems to think ought legitimately to result from a belief in so horrible a creed, would be a wild fanaticism, as unlike to the true effects of the Christian religion as the torrent of the mountain swollen by a flood to the gentleness and purity of a perennial stream, quietly gliding along through meadows green, and fertilized by its living influence.

There are three classes of men, according to this article, who find it difficult, or rather impossible, to become Christian in what he is pleased to call a puritan sense. There is "the worlding, and the man who follows only the guidance of his intellect, and the man of science;" to these he declares that "the achievement of the strict Bible Christian may indeed seem impossible." And why? First, Because he who, "taking the whole New Testament as an infallible guide, would really follow Christ, must completely crush the natural man." He must, in a sense absolute and unqualified, "renounce the world," although it is "the place of his birth, the home of his affections, the sphere of his activity, and possibly of his ambition and glory." He must believe, literally, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He must, if he have great possessions, literally and in every case "sell all that he has on earth, giving the proceeds to the poor." And so he goes on, recklessly making mere assertions, and laying down terms of discipleship never recognized by Christ, and stating difficulties that have no existence save in his own brain, and engendered there by the union of a depraved heart and a darkened understanding.

But let us look at the difficulties to be encountered by the man who takes his intellect as his guide. And here we may sum up in brief the long list he presents, by saying

that he enumerates all the elements of doctrine which are implied in the scheme of God's dispensation of grace, beginning with the Fall of man, by which he incurred God's curse even to his remotest posterity, and ending with the work of Christ, a belief and trust in which inures to the everlasting bliss of the true believer, and a rejection of which results in the loss of the soul forever. He then declares that the man who follows only the guidance of his intellect, finds that the trial the intellect has to pass through before it becomes sufficiently humble to realize the Christian faith, is so tremendous that it "may indeed seem impossible." Well, the Saviour himself declares that if a man bring to the study of his word the pride of his intellect, unsubdued by the spirit of grace, these doctrines will be to him as they were "to the Jews—a stumbling-block," and as they were "to the Greeks—foolishness." But there is no impossibility in their reception whatever, provided the seeker comes with the docile humility of a little child. And deeply mysterious and unintelligible as they may seem to the proud understanding of the unrenewed man, whensoever, by the power of the Divine Spirit, he is brought to yield to the teachings of the word of God, there is an illumination shed through the soul, that enables him to see the "glory that gilds the sacred page," and which satisfies him that the Bible is the work of Infinite Wisdom and Love. He can never see this, however, until, by the convicting and converting power of God's Spirit, he feels a personal interest in these doctrines; how, as a descendant of Adam he is a sinner condemned, and impotent to secure his own salvation, and how, while God's righteous Government demands the execution of the sinner, yet His mercy, displayed in the gift of His Son, upholds the honor of that Government and saves the soul of the sinner that trusts in Him.

But the difficulties which are to be encountered by the two classes just mentioned "are far from being the whole,

and men who have received a good secular education, or who are students of physical science, find these difficulties increase enormously, both in number and intensity, in proportion to the extent of their knowledge." And here we cannot forbear to remark that the manner in which this topic is introduced is indicative of one of two things on the part of the writer. Either he is ignorant of the present state of the discussion which has been going on for many years on the question of discrepancy between the Sacred Record and the facts of physical science; or, being fully aware that these have all been fully, and fairly, and triumphantly met by the ablest and most candid Biblical scholars, he still, with a persistent and inveterate obstinacy, disregards this fact, and proceeds with the enumeration of all these difficulties, just as though they had never been brought to notice and answered by any previous writer, or if they have, that they still remain unmoved in all their original formidable sternness of truth. How often have we heard that astronomical science was fatally at war with the Bible simplicity of expression, in regard to the "rising and setting of the sun," and other heavenly bodies? How often shall it be necessary to repeat the simple and satisfactory answer to this cavil? Does even this writer need to be told that the Bible was never intended to be a text-book of science, beginning with minute definitions, enunciating leading principles, and proceeding by close reasoning in their demonstration, and carefully using only such forms of expression as would be in strict accordance with established scientific terminology? Nay, indeed, may we not ask, if he is not unjust and partial in such censure of Bible usage, while all the world knows full well that even men of science, in their oral communications, as well as in their written treatises, (especially those designed for popular instruction,) adopt the same style of expression themselves? And we beg to know, after all, what connection can be traced between those parts of the Bible narrative which speak of the

phenomena of Nature incidentally, scientifically inaccurate as they may be, and the statement of the great truths of Divine revelation regarding man's lost estate, and the blessed scheme of Redemption?

As it is not science that converts the soul and makes a man a Christian, let a man study the Bible for its ordained purpose, and the works of philosophers for their designed ends; let him go to the Word of God to learn the way of salvation, just as he resorts to the text-books of science to learn their principles. And with as much justness might the student of astronomy complain that in the course of the discussion he should find an expression in regard to God's character and attributes, not strictly in accordance, with the fixed forms of theological science and Bible truth, as that the student of the Bible should find fault with an occasional expression in the narrative parts of the Sacred Volume not quite according to the rules of science. And as such a theological blunder in a scientific work would never detract from the value of a treatise otherwise correct and philosophical, why not allow the same rule to apply to the same state of things in the Bible?

When a certain splendid painting of Apelles was subjected to the criticism of spectators, and when its beauty and excellence was the theme of universal laudation, there chanced to be among the examiners a shoe-maker, whose practised eye detected the deficiency of a single string in the shoe of the figure, which to his low and vulgar taste constituted a fatal defect in this work of art, and may have been to him ample proof of the ignorance and incompetency of the great painter. But others, better trained and more refined, might have readily awarded to this picture the meed of faultless excellence as a specimen of the artist's skill and genius, even though the shoe might have lacked a string. And this classic story furnishes us with another illustration of the presumption of these self-appointed censors of the Bible style. For when the shoe-

maker, emboldened by his success in detecting one failure in Appelles, proceeded to discuss other points of the picture, which were not in the category of the art of St. Crispin, he only shared the fate of the worthy magistrate of Messina, and instead of detracting from the glory of the artist, he only immortalized his own presumptuousness as the unconscious original of the ancient proverbial caution, —“*ne sutor ultra crepidam*.” The criticism of the shoe-maker did not bring into discredit the skill of Apelles, nor detract from his glory as the greatest painter of his age. Nor have the carping, cavilling censures of these infidels dimmed one ray of glory that rests upon the word of God, nor thrown one barrier in the way of the humble, devout and earnest seeker after a solution of the great problem, “How shall man be just with God?”

Hitherto in this discussion we have, merely for argument's sake, allowed that the Bible in its expressions is inaccurate, somewhat in the same sense that a work of science may be, and as they often are in regard to sciences incidentally alluded to, not connected with themselves. But we must not fail to bear in mind the fact that there is an immeasurable difference between the usage as it occurs in the respective volumes of God and man. It is an unmerited concession which we have here indicated, when we suppose a possibility of inaccuracy in the divinely inspired Word. There is not the slightest analogy between the alleged inaccuracy of the Bible and the blunders of which many scientific men are guilty, when in a treatise on one science they undertake to speak of another. For, while the God of all wisdom, in wonderful condescension to the race of man, purposely so expresses himself as to be intelligible to the humblest capacity, the human author, in failing to present correctly a principle foreign to his subject, does so through ignorance. We may add that if God had chosen to inspire Moses, and the rest of the “Holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,”

with a knowledge of all the sciences of astronomy, physics, geology, etc., and had He caused them to express themselves at all times precisely as strict scientific accuracy demands, then we can see very readily how difficulties would have arisen in the way of the "untutored peasant," which might have rendered it well-nigh impossible for him to accept the Bible as the word of God. As the matter stands now, there is difficulty to no one. When the ignorant read, they are not startled by learned statements in regard to natural phenomena which seem at war with facts as they appear to them, and so they find no obstacle barring them from entering into the special province over which the Bible presides, the revelation of the way of salvation, where all is clear and unambiguous, and wherein "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err." When the man of learning and science reads, he has no more right to make a difficulty out of these expressions as found in the word of God, than he has to found upon them a charge of ignorance against his brother savans, who use the same expressions, though they are inaccurate. And we will not so degrade his intellectual capacity, or his common sense and intelligence as to believe he is ignorant of this fact. And what, then, after all, does it amount to? A miserable quibble, utterly unworthy of a truly philosophical critic. The poverty of the resources of this Reviewer is manifested in the very fact that in order to make out a point against the System of Divine Truth, he has found himself compelled to resort to an objection which has been so long exploded that even professional infidels lay no stress upon it in the management of their argument against the Word of God.

But it is sometimes of advantage to the cause of truth to be simple in explanation, and patient in repetition of old, familiar arguments, even at the risk of causing the learned reader to say "I am learning nothing very fast." And so, for the benefit of all concerned, we venture to say to this

writer, who finds that in the case of the "untutored peasant," the only way to account for his ready reception of the Word of God is by attributing it to his ignorance, that we give two reasons, either of which will be more satisfactory to the candid and sincere.

1. One reason for his facility of credence is, we hesitate not to say that not once in a thousand cases does a plain, ingenuous mind ever think of such things as subjects of the slightest reflection. They do not constitute to him objects of either faith or unbelief. He is not reading the Bible with a view to such subjects. He reads it to learn the dealings of God with the race of man; to find out the facts of man's history and the story of his fall, the revelation of God's will in reference to the destiny of man, the statement of the way of salvation, how God can "be just, and yet justify the sinner that believeth;" in short, he reads the Bible for what it proposes to teach, and the points which, in this writer's estimation, would constitute difficulties if he were not so ignorant, are regarded by him as matters of the merest indifference; he does not *doubt* about them, simply because they do not seem to him to have anything to do, either one way or the other, with the great matters of spiritual interest, about which it is the special province of the Bible to give instruction, and about which he is himself most anxiously concerned.

2. But suppose one of these "untutored peasants" should be found who has had the questionable advantage of hearing that these are very strange blunders made by the sacred writers, and by no means reconcilable with the accepted facts of science. There is not a doubt but that, when they are proposed as difficulties to a mind of ordinary strength, unless it be hopelessly predisposed to cavil, the reader will seize at once upon a satisfactory solution of the difficulties, either by referring them to the category of non-essentials, by the very force of his own reflections, or, on a suggestion of these difficulties to a competent instructor, he

will see the perfect propriety and naturalness of the ordinary mode of explanation, by referring the alleged inaccuracies of expression to the necessity of adopting language in accordance with universal usage, even where it does not comport with exact scientific style, and by humbly referring the statement of a miraculous event to the power of God, though to believe it is to do violence to all scientific principles in regard to the laws of Nature.

And it is to be noted that this writer is unfair in another point, in his mode of discussion. For he sets out with arraying before us the contradiction of scientific facts which characterize the Bible phraseology, and before he gets through, we find him including in the list matters purely miraculous. What right has he to take for granted that the miracle of the sun standing still at the command of Joshua, and "hasting not to go down about a whole day," is inadmissible because it is inconsistent with "those wondrous physical laws by which the positions, movements, and order of the bodies constituting the solar system are maintained." We behold in this occurrence, not a violation of the laws of Nature, but a manifestation of the Supreme control of those laws which belong to the God of Nature. If we admit that there is such a Being, surely we must accord to Him the power of controlling Nature, for any reason which to him may seem sufficient. We make a very wide distinction between this, which is a miracle, and the various forms of expression which popular usage requires should be adopted in alluding to natural phenomena. The language used to state the former, we accept as literally true, while the latter is well understood as conventional language, which is not used through ignorance, nor with any intention to deceive, nor does it, in point of fact, ever deceive any one who reads it.

Just so he is guilty of unfairness in intimating that because the rainbow is the result of the laws of refraction and decomposition of light, therefore it is an effort of

credulity to look upon it as "set in the clouds *for the first time* when the waters had subsided." Does the Bible make any such statement as this? Not at all! The words "*for the first time*" are wholly a gratuitous addition to the words of the Sacred Narrative, and this writer should have been careful how he presumed to add words in this way, which have the effect of entirely changing the meaning of the Sacred Text. If he had no reverence for God's Word, he ought to have had more regard for common honesty than to have distorted the intent of the passage so as to deceive. His design is to discredit the narrative, by making it say what it does not say, and then to show that what he makes it state is impossible to be believed, because it is contrary to optics—that is, as refraction and decomposition of light must have produced the same effects from the very beginning of creation, there must have been rainbows always, and, therefore, it could not be true, as he makes the Bible say, that this was the first rainbow that ever was seen, which God makes the token of his covenant with Noah.

We may now attempt somewhat in the same way to dispose of his intimated difficulties about geology, which, though no difficulties to the "untutored peasant," on account of his ignorance, he means to insist upon as real difficulties if the poor fellow only knew it. In the first place, he pays no regard to the matter, as it is not what he is after. In the second place, the facts of geology are not inconsistent with the facts of the Bible, or with its doctrines either. What if it be true that the earth has been the theatre of organization "sixty million years"—the Bible says nothing to the contrary. Because the purpose of its revelation was to narrate the history of human organization, and God's will concerning man, therefore, there was not needed any allusion to any previous organization. And geology does not discover traces of man of higher antiquity than is represented in the Bible. And while there may have been catastrophes of the extinction of life in many previous

organizations, and thus death may have taken place before Adam sinned, yet this is no inconsistency with what the Bible states; since it is only concerned with death as the result of sin upon a race which but for sin would have been immortal. The Bible does not say that there had been no previous instance of the death of other animals; but only that there never had been any human death until sin brought about this awful event.

This learned critic, further, in no doubtful way, charges that the Bible cannot be plenarily inspired, because the word "Redeemer" has been substituted for the true word, "Avenger," in the translation of Job's words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He, no doubt, thinks that if it were truthfully and verbally rendered "I know that my Avenger liveth," it would be rejected by the devout believer, on the ground that it would change the meaning of the Patriarch's confession. But we rather shrewdly suspect that he is not so well versed in Biblical criticism as he would have us believe, or he would have known that the same great Being who is regarded by the devout believer as his Redeemer, is also represented as his Avenger, and that it matters not at all whether this passage be rendered in the one form or the other; Job doubtless referred to the blessed God-man, who not only redeems His people from the curse and bondage of the Law, from Sin and Satan, but avenges them on all their enemies, accusers and persecutors, especially their spiritual foes. And he ought to know, if he does not, that the translation he advocates, understood in a Bible sense, differs very slightly from that to which he objects; "Avenger," in this connection, being nearly the same as "Redeemer." The Hebrew word גֹּאֵל (goel,) as all Hebrew scholars know, is primarily used of next kinsman, whose office it was to redeem, by a price paid, the sold or mortgaged estate of his deceased kinsman, (Lev. xxv: 25;) and to revenge his death, (Num. 35: 12;) and thus the passage, read either way, is appropriate to Job's

condition, as Satan had been emphatically his accuser and his enemy, and, therefore, it would have been very natural for him to look forward to the Saviour as his avenger. This view is further strengthened by the passage, "And shall not God *avenge* His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him? *I tell you He will avenge* them speedily," etc.

And the "untutored peasant" would find just as little difficulty in the certainty that the passage quoted about the three witnesses, was an interpolation, as he does in his happy ignorance. For he could be told by almost any intelligent friend, two things that would satisfy his mind: 1st, That the Christian world lays no stress on the passage, because they are very ready to admit that there may be a preponderance of evidence against its genuineness; and, 2d, The doctrine of the Trinity, which the passage is regarded as so triumphantly proving, can very well afford to dispense with this part of the proof, as the Bible abounds with "irresistible evidence in other undisputed passages," to establish the doctrine.

And so, also, if he should have his ignorance enlightened by some *benevolent infidel*, who should call his attention to the fact that the genealogy of Christ was traced "through his reputed father, Joseph, up to David, in order that a prophecy might be fulfilled, although he was born of a virgin," any trouble that might distress him in this, would just as readily be removed by the plain statement of the mode of reconciling the apparent discrepancy, which is received as satisfactory by the Christian world, viz: That the prophecy was fulfilled in the fact of Christ's descent from David "through Joseph, his legal father, and through Mary, his real mother"—the first "by law in the royal line of kings," and the second "by direct personal descent," and it was equally as truly fulfilled in His miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin, by "the power of the Highest." So that these illustrations do not prove a single point in favor of the conclusion to which this writer brings

us, that "the less a man knows of the history of the Bible, and the less critically he studies its pages, the more unhesitating may become his faith in it as a supernaturally communicated, and wholly infallible book." We have shown, on the contrary, that though an "untutored peasant" might be shaken for the moment from his simple faith by having skeptical doubts officiously awakened in his mind, the more critically even he studies the Bible, by the aid of others, the more likely is he to be brought round again to his original position, and to have his first convictions confirmed and established. And there is far more hope of such a case, than there is of one who has yielded himself up to the superficial system of infidelity, adopting all its cant slang and thread-bare objections, and who will not allow the Bible and its friends to be heard in defence. We agree with him, that the plain, unlettered reader of the Blessed Volume will embrace, with unquestioning assent, all it teaches, and be arrested by no difficulties, either scientific or critical; but while this may be true, we mean to have it understood that there need be no difficulties in the way of any one, however much he may know of the Bible history, or however critically he may have studied its pages.

With respect to those few scientific difficulties which are selected as representatives of that "vast number of other kinds which embarrass the student of nature when he strives to harmonize the teachings of Science with those of Revelation," we say again, that this writer makes an entirely false issue. He assumes that a man's "Christian duty" requires him to believe what it *does not* require him to believe at all, and we demand of him where he finds the requirement laid down? In what portion of God's word is any man required to believe "that the earth is immovable; that the sun, moon, and stars were created to revolve around it as ministering orbs, giving it light, and dividing the night from the day, and that the starry dome above us is a solid firmament, dividing the waters above it from those

below"? Whenever we read a passage in the Bible, we are bound to interpret it as the manifest design of God, the Holy Spirit, in its revelation, requires we should interpret it, and this design allows, nay, requires, us to have regard, in our interpretation of it, to all our previous knowledge. For example, when we read that God appointed the sun and moon to give light to the earth, as if the earth were the central body of the system, and that these bodies rise and set, our previous knowledge is to be present with us, and therefore we know how to interpret it aright, notwithstanding that some of the words are used in compliance with popular usage. And our Christian duty does not require us to believe what contradicts the clearest principles of science. Besides, we need not find difficulty (if we understand the original languages of Scripture) in the idea of "the starry dome being a solid firmament, dividing the waters above it from those below," since it will appear, from a critical examination of the Sacred Text, that the "English translators, by following the '*firmamentum*' of the Vulgate, which is a translation of στερεωμα of the Septuagint, have deprived this passage (Gen. i. : 6) of all sense and meaning. The Hebrew word רָקִיעַ (rakeeâ), from רָקַע (rakâ), to spread out, as the curtains of a tent or pavilion, simply signifies an expanse, or space, and consequently that circumambient space or expansion separating the clouds which are in the higher regions of it from the seas, etc., which are below it." (Clarke.)

But that a man's Christian duty does require him to believe the statement of Joshua's arrest of the sun and moon, and that "the shadow went backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz," is based upon different grounds, because these are narratives of miracles performed by God. And while there may be many methods of explaining these occurrences, in accordance with philosophical principles, that may seem to be plausible and satisfactory to others, we, for our part, are content to understand both as genuine miracles,

the result of the direct interposition of Divine Power—that in the case of the miracle of Joshua, the sun was caused, *not to stand still*, but to withhold his influence from the earth, so that *it* stood still, and thus the light of day was prolonged until Joshua had time to avenge himself on his enemies; and that in the case of the dial of Ahaz, there was an actual retrogression of the shadow. But by what means it was effected we do not know, nor is it necessary to know. It is sufficient to know that each case offered a suitable occasion for the interference of God, and that He made use of no more power than was needful to produce the result. Joshua required a protraction of the light of day to enable him to pursue his enemies and cut them off before they should be protected from pursuit by the darkness of night, and thus have time to rally and recover, and give battle again. Hezekiah would not have been satisfied with any thing but a miracle to re-assure him, so he chose to have it go backward instead of forward, as this appeared to him to be the more difficult sign to be displayed, and more worthy of the power of God. As to the silence of the Egyptian astronomers about the miracles of Joshua, that proves nothing, as we have proof from writers both heathen and others, that there is no certain history or monument in heathen authors, of any thing done before the historic period of Greece, and the best chronology makes that more than a thousand years after Joshua's time, and all before that is regarded, both by learned heathen and Christian writers, as uncertain, unknown or obscure time. But let us refer the reader to what President Edwards has suggested (*Hist. Redemp.* p. 194), which any man's "Christian duty" may *allow* him to believe:

"With respect to the miracle wrought by Joshua, we beg leave to add, there is no necessity from the text to suppose any real effect wrought on the bodies of the sun or moon, nor perhaps of the earth itself; the most natural interpretation seems to be, that the light of the sun, and perhaps also of the moon, blended with it, was miraculously protracted, not, it may be, on the whole hemisphere, but from Gibeon to Ajalon, and on the adjacent country."

And the reason why history records no such event as the retrogression of the dial, etc., is no doubt owing to the fact that it was merely local, and involved no such derangement of the solar system as would have been extensively observed through the world. In proof of its being local, we have the indirect evidence of the Prince of Babylon sending to inquire respecting "the wonder that had been *done in the land*."

The scientific man, we repeat, can find no more difficulty or mystery in "the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ, as the only means of redeeming the human race from eternal punishment," than any other man. It is, "without controversy, a great mystery of godliness;" confessedly so. It is so accepted by the whole Christian world, and yet such is its entire consistency and accordance with the character and glory of God, and its adaptedness to the exigencies of the human race, that its mystery is not once to be thought of as a difficulty in its reception as a true and blessed revelation of God's gracious design to save the lost race. It is hardly required of us to add what is among the simplest elements of theological truth, that a revelation without mystery would carry with it no evidence of a divine original. If it be, therefore, a mystery to the geologist, his consolation is that it is so to others as well. And it is a mystery, not because one man's intellect is less vigorous than another's, but it is so by the very necessity of the case—*per se*, because it is one of the "secret things that belong unto the Lord our God." And yet what a precious, blessed mystery has it proved to thousands of the race of man, including astronomers, geologists, and the "untutored peasant," who is too ignorant to see difficulties. Our author finally excuses himself, and relieves us of the further examination of these scientific difficulties, by assuring us that "the few instances given, may amply suffice to show that the secular knowledge [of scientific men] and their Christian faith being in an inverse ratio, Christian revivals among

such men never occur." It will not escape the notice of the observant reader, that this is another instance of this writer's skill in sophistry. For he here states, what perhaps no one would ever deny, that revivals never occur among scientific men as a class. And he might have gone further, and added that revivals never occur among any set of men as a class. We never hear of revivals among politicians as a class—is that owing to their secular knowledge? But he cannot say that the influence of a revival of religion never extends to a scientific man, or to a man whose secular knowledge is large and extensive. If he should undertake to assume such a position, it can easily be refuted by cases within our own experience.

But his true position is not this. Indeed, it might be much easier to maintain that statement, than the point which he evidently aims at, and to which all this array of dogmatical assertions, about the difficulties of becoming a Bible Christian, has been merely introductory, viz: That no scientific man, no man who has a good secular education, no man who takes his intellect for his guide, can be a Bible Christian. This is his meaning when the fog which he has raised so ingeniously around the subject is all cleared away. Having this in his own mind, he cunningly confounds the becoming a Bible Christian, with the influence of what he understands by Christian revivals. Never was there a more glaring illustration of the charge which is often brought against sophistical disputants, that they manufacture a set of premises and then prove their points, by drawing what are, from them, legitimate conclusions, than the whole course of discussion in reference to revivals. It is, from the beginning to the end, an utter misapprehension, or a wicked misrepresentation of the whole subject.

He gives as "a condition of the first importance in order to effect sudden conversions—*ignorance*." Now here, again, if he means one thing, we agree with him in a certain sense, but if he means another, we have nothing in common with

him. If he means by sudden conversion, an enthusiastic, and a fanatical profession of religion, made amid confusion and noise, and with no adequate conception of the infinite importance of the subject, then it may be, as a general rule, true that more ignorant persons are thus brought to a certain form of religious profession, than any other class. But if we are to understand by the term *conversion*, the real work of the Spirit upon the heart, then we say that the inference that "ignorance is a prime requisite" to such conversions, is wholly inadmissible, and we deny his statement that such an "inference is justified by experience." Not an instance to which he refers shows that it is true. What if the first disciples of Jesus were "notoriously unlearned and ignorant men, and their preaching not a result of artificial eloquence and learning?" Does not this writer know that their ignorance and want of training in the schools of human science, were infinitely more than compensated by the personal teachings of the Incarnate Son of God for three years? And yet it is not true that they were all ignorant men. Luke was an accomplished professional man, and his style is highly polished and scholarly. Paul, the Apostle, was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a finished scholar in all the wealth of Rabbinical learning, and an adept in the lore of Greece and Rome. And the remarkable fact is, that the most sudden conversion among them all, was that of this chiefest among the Apostles, possessed of more learning than all the rest. It is plain, then, that in the very cases he cites, his inference is shown to be illegitimate, and the truth is just this, that conversion does not depend upon the fact of either a man's ignorance, or his knowledge of the wisdom of this world, and God, to prove this, converted the ignorant fisherman, the learned physician, and the accomplished scholar, and that by the power of the Holy Spirit, "that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of men." We cannot follow this train of argument through all the dark alleys of distortion and misrep-

resentation used by this writer. For he seems not to make the slightest discrimination between the first pure and holy developments of the Christian Church, and the corruptions of Rome. What possible connection has "the anchorite of the Egyptian desert, and the pillar-saint of Syria," their wretched souls darkened by the oppressive midnight of horrid superstition, with the pure and spiritual operation of Christianity? How—in what possible sense—can they be regarded as representatives of the influence of true religion? In no sense at all. By the time these miserable spectacles were standing like dismal figures on the historic panorama of the world, there had swept over the landscape of Church history a dreary winter, and nowhere could a true manifestation of the heavenly influence of the religion of Christ be witnessed, save among the caves and dens of the Alps, whither the Waldenses had been driven by the rod of persecution. Thither had this writer turned his thoughts, he might have found the true representative of Christianity. And if "the monastic orders were recruited from the ranks of the poor and uneducated;" if "the Christian sect of flagellants, or Brethren of the Cross, which extended over Europe in the fourteenth century," did consist "chiefly of persons of the lower class," this has nothing to do with the subject whatever, as these orders and sects are no more representatives of pure Christianity, than are der-vishes or Brahmins. It is the height of ignorance, or of persistent and wilful distortion of this whole subject, therefore, that we should find here confounded in the same paragraph the extravagant superstitions of monks and hermits, with the accepted principles of our religion, which determine us "not to know any thing save Christ and him crucified," and which makes faith all in all.

We refuse, also, to go off with this writer in his eccentric digressions into the amount of intellect and learning among the Methodists, save only to remark how transparent in his double purpose to account for their zeal in reli-

gion on the score of their ignorance, and to salve over this insult by granting that there have been found among them "intellectual freemen, men of genius, of whom the nation is proud." But his argument has wholly failed to prove that ignorance is necessary to conversion, even in the instances cited by himself, for while the labors of Whitefield and Wesley may have resulted in the conversion of thousands of the heathen masses of England sunk in the deepest ignorance (yet not by any means wholly confined to such), we still are met with the stubborn fact, that these men themselves, who were the agents of the conversion of these thousands, were men of "good secular education," and had distinguished themselves by their scholastic attainments when they became converted;—how account for this? Besides, they numbered many among their converts who were among the better and more enlightened classes, and of the highest rank. We encounter, however, one admission on the part of this writer, to which he was forced, viz: that in the revival which has been enjoyed in the United States recently, a larger proportion of the middle and respectable classes was found than usually distinguishes such movements. And as this contradicts his assumption, he proceeds to account for it by referring it to the commercial panic and distress that prevailed simultaneously with this state of religious awakening. Now, it seems to us that this is a total abandonment of the point in hand, for, although he sets out by saying that ignorance is an essential condition to these revivals, he now, after being forced to admit that other classes besides the ignorant were brought under their influence, finds that commercial distress will answer as well as ignorance as an auxiliary. He, however, endeavors to rescue his argument from this difficulty by having recourse to his usual expedient, viz: sophism. For, says he, "How few of the two hundred and fifty thousand who obtained forgiveness for their debts of sin, were of the really educated class, may be conjectured from the exultation with which the small number of cases

adducible of conversion from heresy and infidelity is dwelt on." In the first place, we need not conclude that these cases of heretics and infidels necessarily come from the more educated class. It by no means follows, that a man is highly educated because he is an infidel or a heretic. Indeed, it has been clearly demonstrated by writers on this subject, that the greatest reason why men are infidel in their views, is that they are ignorant of the great truths which they profess to disbelieve. And again, if exultation was manifested on their conversion, it was not because the conquest by the Spirit of God had been gained over the minds of educated men, but over the hearts of those who were so deeply depraved as to deny the Divine origin of the Christian faith. Instead of ignorance, then, being a condition of prime importance in sudden conversions, we prefer to believe, and we think that it can be easily established, that ignorance is the mother of infidelity! And it is a plain case, that the instances enumerated of converted Unitarians and Infidels were narrated with special interest, and dwelt upon with delight, by the Christian writers who took note of the facts, not because they were triumphs of God's grace over cultivated intellects and bold thinkers, but because they had been "*infidel* lawyers," "*infidel* editors," and "hardened *infidels*, seventy-two years of age," and "Socinian ladies, entangled in the ensnaring fallacy of Unitarianism." Let us not lose sight of this fact, that it is not a conditional proposition he lays down, about ignorance being a prime requisite in sudden conversions, but it is a broad and universally applicable statement, that, in order to effect these conversions, "a condition of the first importance is ignorance." That is, the conversions reported as occurring in Christian revivals are only found among the poor and uneducated classes. Consequently, we hold him to this form of his own proposition, nor must he be permitted to deviate from it at all without suffering the consequence of giving up his ground. What, then, are we to

think of a man who, having set out to prove that ignorant people are the only subjects of these revivals, is found making this statement, that the revival in Ireland is *confined chiefly* to this class? “Chiefly” implies not altogether. Well, then, it is admitted by him that they are not *all* ignorant, and if so, how can he say that it is a condition of the first importance that these converts should be ignorant? The fact that one individual of good education is a well attested case of conversion, overthrows his reasoning, and he must go to work and weave some other sophism into his argument in order to account for this exceptional case.

We understand it well enough, and can explain it, if the writer and his friends could only understand and appreciate our explanation. But there are none so blind as those who will not see. The whole matter is simply this: the religion of the blessed Saviour is wisely and graciously adapted to all classes and conditions of men—the wise and the simple, the learned and the ignorant, the man who takes his intellect for his guide, and the untutored peasant, and the man of science—all are alike capable of being impressed by its Divine power. And while we readily admit that among the poor and uneducated class many of its subjects are found, we claim it as the testimony of experience and of history, that the Cross of Jesus Christ has numbered among its conquests some of the brightest ornaments of the scientific world, and some of the greatest lights of the various professions. We have no difficulty in understanding the modified form of his statement, that revivals are *chiefly* confined to the ignorant, for it is true, as here implied, that others besides this class were converted, as is always the case.

His second “condition for effecting a revival, next in importance to that of ignorance, is, that all the members of the Church shall enjoy complete freedom from doctrinal and disciplinal restraint, in order that the laity may coöper-

erate in the religious services, by preaching, mutual exhortation, telling how the Lord has dealt with them, and combining in fervent and long-continued prayer for the salvation of souls." In other words, "the coöperation of the laity and continuous public prayer," constitute the second consideration. But it is not true, as is thus intimated, that these revivals owe their origin to lay coöperation and public prayer, as something extraordinary, and up to the time of their "*getting up*," altogether unknown. The history of the great American Revival of 1858-'59 proves that this writer knows not whereof he affirms. That there was coöperation between the laity and the clergy is true. But it was in the prayer-meeting—the noon prayer-meeting only—a social gathering of Christians for the purpose of prayer and mutual conference, that this coöperation was found to exist. The pulpits were never occupied by any but the regular Pastors, and other duly accredited Ministers invited by the Pastors of the several Churches. And there is no authentic account of ignorant laymen taking upon themselves to perform public service in the Churches. And yet we have had a revival—a glorious revival—and it is still in progress, exhibiting none of the distinctive marks of ignorance and fanaticism which this writer insinuates, throughout his whole article, constitute the chief elements of Christian Revivals.

But let us examine "the third condition which is to be observed in order to effect revivals." He says it is "*that the intellect be rendered inactive, the imagination and emotions being excited, and that the sentiment of fear be especially addressed, and powerfully wrought upon.*" We make one general remark in reply to this assertion, and that is, that while this condition may, and undoubtedly does, result in producing intense excitement, not only on the subject of religion, but on any subject, we deny that it will account for what we understand by a true and genuine revival of religion. Having made this issue with him, so as to leave

no ground for doubt as to the real position we occupy, we wish to notice some of his preliminary remarks, before we proceed to the discussion of the subject. We shall in the sequel be able to show that the whole matter of Christian Revivals has been, either through ignorance or malice, misrepresented. He obviously means to show that, the tremendous effects which were produced by the Apostles in the preaching of the early times, were mainly attributable to the power of fear, arising from two causes, viz: "the unfaltering belief in the doctrine of future punishment," and the belief "that the great drama of the last judgment was near at hand." Now, it is surely competent to ask why this first cause had never produced the same effects on the Jewish nation, when the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments had constituted a prominent point in their system of religious belief during all their previous history? The early Christians did not believe it any more confidently than the devout men of Israel had believed it always under the Old Testament revelation, which is full of this doctrine. But the greater power exerted over the primitive Christian Church, arose not so much from fear excited by this doctrine, as from the fact that this, and all the other great truths of God's revelation, were now set forth in a manner more clear, and in a point of view less encumbered with ceremonial observances, and consequently more simply spiritual. It was illustriously demonstrated to them, that these great principles derived their force and influence from their more immediate connection with the power of an endless life. The temporal and tangible realities of the ancient Theocracy had the tendency to obscure and hold in abeyance the more spiritual aspects of the Divine Government. But now there had been ushered in, with mighty signs and wonders, the Kingdom of Heaven, which its great King announced to be "not of this world," to consist "not of meat and drink, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It was this new spiritual view given to the system of Divine truth, especially accompanied by the personal presence of the Messiah, which invested all the doctrines of the word of God with an interest such as never before had been thrown around them. It was the operation of a principle which is well known among men, that a close contact of things, in themselves important and interesting, gives to many men, for the time, a more vivid impression of their reality.

As to the other assigned cause, viz: "the belief that the last judgment was near at hand," it is wonderful that any one who has read the New Testament with any care, can make assertions so reckless. What proof is there in any part of Paul's writings to show that "he was fully persuaded that Christ would, during his life-time, reappear in his glory to reward his saints, and to pronounce the final doom of the wicked"? Manifestly, none whatever. The passage quoted, "the time is short," is but a solemn admonition of the shortness and uncertainty of life in those perilous times. And so far from Paul's being under any such belief, does not this writer know that he makes it a matter of most earnest exhortation to the church at Thessalonica, (II. Thess., ch. ii., 1-4 vs.) that they should not suffer their minds to be shaken by the false teachings of some among them, "that the day of the Lord was at hand"? And would Paul guard them against this belief, and give them reasons why it could not be true, if he himself were so "fully persuaded" of it?

Then comes another instance of his confounding Romish falsehoods with the principles and practices of the Evangelical Church. What have we, as the friends of true revivals, to do with purgatory, and priestly influence, and indulgences? The belief in these monstrous superstitions may "prevent the fears of faithful Catholics from rising to the revival point," just as they prevent the mass of them from knowing any thing whatever in regard to true spiritual

godliness. But what about protestants? How is it that the belief in future punishment, which is universally held by all of this class, seems in the main so utterly inoperative, and that revivals, which he says originate from this cause, are only occasional? According to his showing, this awful belief, which addresses itself to the fears of men who do believe it, ought uniformly to produce revivals; but this is, in point of fact, not true. We know what he has said about this, that men "only believe that they believe" this doctrine, that they do not really believe it. Now, does not this wear the appearance of child's play, to say in one breath that this belief produces revivals, and then in another to say that the very subjects of the revivals do not believe it?

It is not difficult for us to account for the fact that men who theoretically believe such tremendous doctrines spend their lives in comparative peace. It is owing to that other principle, which this writer discards—*native depravity*—and which the Scriptures designate as "blindness of mind," preventing men from apprehending these solemn truths, because their minds are occupied with the things of time and sense. Nor will they see them until the scales are made to fall from their eyes by the power of the Divine Spirit, who is the agent in all true conversion.

When he says that "the more preachers preach to the reason of their hearers, the less frequently are they convinced of sin," if he means addressing the reason with the truths of the Gospel, he takes ground where we can meet him with a denial based on experience. For this is the kind of preaching which alone will ever convince of sin, under the blessing of the Spirit. But if he means that those scenes of excitement which are so common under the name of revivals, are not to be effected by such preaching, then we have no objection to this statement. We believe, indeed, that one reason why those spurious movements are so frequent, is that the sound, faithful preaching of the

Gospel has fallen into such desuetude in certain quarters, and among certain classes of preachers and hearers. The cases illustrative of the violent effects of terror in producing religious convictions, are all inapplicable to the true and Scriptural work of conversion. And if we should admit that among other emotions excited in certain individuals, fear is one, and that violent bodily exercises also characterize some religious excitements, we must accompany all this by two remarks. 1. These fears and consequent bodily exercises are not essential elements of a true revival at all, but only accidental accompaniments, dependent on physical organization in the first instance, and propagated by that mysterious principle—sympathy. 2. The decision as to the spuriousness or genuineness of the work is not, and never has been, dependent on these things, but on the character of the means used to produce conviction and conversion, combined with the results in each case, tried subsequently by the test of time and experience. Perhaps there never was a more clear illustration of the nature and effects of these bodily exercises, in connection with the march of the glorious and genuine work of the Spirit, than is found in the great revivals of 1739, and onwards, which took place in New England, New Jersey and Virginia. In these revivals we have an opportunity of drawing a clear discrimination between the true and the false. From the records of these revivals, gathered up from the letters of Jonathan Edwards, the Tennents, and others concerned in them, and presented in historic form in the valuable work of Dr. Hodge, (*Hist. of the Presbyterian Ch.*, part ii., chap. iv.) and accompanied by comments and reflections of great importance and interest, we attain a very clear and satisfactory view of this whole subject. We see that there can be no difficulty in referring to their true source the extravagances of bodily agitation which occurred. They were then, and they always are, referable to natural causes. They arise from any cause that will

affect the nervous system. Persons of a nervous temperament are most liable to them. They affect *ignorant* people more than any other class. They originate in seasons of general excitement. These affections are just as common under one sort of excitement as another. They are not peculiar to revivals of religion. They are found prevalent only among fanatics—no matter what may be the occasion of the fanaticism—and are not an infallible proof of God's presence. They are propagated by a kind of infection among those who witness them. They are cured by removing the exciting causes, or in addressing the subjects so as to produce "fear, shame, or a sense of duty." It never can be proved that these bodily exercises are produced *only* by "genuine religious feeling." The proper method of distinguishing between these effects of terror on nervous temperaments and the effects of religious feeling, is to consider what departments of the mind are affected. If we find that it is the imagination that is excited, then we may at once decide that these exercises do not proceed from "Divine illumination." But if we find that the "moral emotions" are affected, we may attribute the effects to the influence of God's Spirit. And the incontrovertible proof of this is, that "No such results are recorded as arising from the preaching of Christ or the Apostles." Now, these being facts admitted by the sound and judicious Christian historian, as well as by the contemporary ministers who mingled in these revivals, it will be seen at once that there is on this point no room for debate. We all agree, with this writer, that "natural causes are sufficient" to account for all the extraordinary bodily affections accompanying the great revivals in 1740-'45, and in the beginning of the present century, as well as those which are reported in connection with the Irish revival of 1859. He calls them "alleged miracles." We reply, that no judicious Christian ever regarded them as miracles. To be sure, Whitefield regarded them as the tokens of God's

presence, but Whitefield, we all know, was greatly swayed by his fervent and glowing imagination, and was not always a safe guide; and, being a transient visitor to these scenes, and not a permanent Pastor, had no opportunity of testing them by time. Besides, the Tennents and their contemporaries discountenanced these things. Jonathan Edwards, though at first much disposed to encourage these exercises, as evidences of the direct presence of the Spirit, was led subsequently to change his views entirely, and disapproved of them as earnestly as any one else. All that we have read in regard to "epilepsy, mania and dancing, the jerks, etc.," although connected with the revivals, is to be understood as forming no component part of a genuine work of the Spirit in a revival. But in the account given of these scenes, just bear in mind that they were the effects of nervous agitation in the first instances, and these effects propagated by sympathy through vast multitudes assembled in the same place, and listening to animated and fervent preaching. And it has been well said, that Whitefield, with his unsurpassed powers as an orator, could have produced very much the same effects had he spoken as eloquently on almost any other subject of interest.

The difference between this writer and the advocates of a genuine work of Grace is, that he identifies these exercises with the revival as a necessary and indispensable part of it, while we hold that they are accompanying phenomena, having no necessary connection with such a work, but, on the contrary, oftentimes leading to results greatly to be lamented. We need not follow him, then, in his argument on this topic, as we have no defence to offer in behalf of these extravagances, nor do we claim them as part and parcel of the Spirit's work. We simply say that their connection with these revivals is only an illustration of the truth, sadly testified to by us all, that among imperfect human agents, sin and error is mixed with all the good they effect. Before we take leave of him, however, we

wish to correct some errors which he has committed in his statements, in so far as they relate to the recent religious revivals. Among these statements there may be some that are true, in regard to wild and fanatical works of confusion and disorder, but in the great American Revival of 1858-'59 and 1860, the occurrence of these irregularities formed the exception, and not the rule. The most perfect stillness and solemnity prevailed. The meetings which were most remarkable as revival meetings, were the *Noon Prayer-Meetings*, which, originating in New York, are still observed in a very large number of the principal towns and cities of the Union. So that in this case, at least, the promoters of revivals did not avail themselves of the psychological principle (to the honor of whose discovery this writer seems to be fairly entitled), that "during sunlight the perceptive faculties, and the reflective, which are dependent on them for data, are chiefly active; and that these, reposing during the night, permit the feelings to become most dominant," and hence, he adds, "the promoters of revivals wisely choose the night-time as the period most favorable for putting forth all their strength." On the contrary, they selected that period when the sunlight was at its greatest intensity—noon,—when "the perceptive and reflective faculties," according to him, were "chiefly active." They then "put forth all their strength," which consisted in very short, fervent, pointed prayers and talks, not exceeding five minutes in length, and this meeting to last just one hour. And in this Noon Prayer-Meeting the mighty influences were felt which resulted in these numerous conversions, giving to the whole movement the name of a Revival of Religion, wherein the power of the Divine Spirit was recognized as operating silently, yet most manifestly. Another misrepresentation worthy of notice is found in that portion of his article where he speaks of "the moral and social reforms which revivals induce." False premises here again furnish him an oppor-

tunity of claiming a victory. Assuming that one of the principles of the Christian system is "a renunciation of private property, by having all things in common," he presents this as one of "the practical difficulties of becoming a Christian," which "are quietly ignored in modern times." No doubt his design in this insinuation is to prove that revivals, or even conversions, in ordinary times, would never take place if this, which he calls "a Christian doctrine," were made prominent by the "promoters of revivals." The whole conception of this idea is utterly unfounded, preposterous and absurd. And it is truly marvellous, how he can have the face to say that Christ enjoins—at least indirectly—as a moral obligation on all His followers, "a community of goods." Did any one ever before quote the case of the rich young man, who came to Christ inquiring "what he must do to inherit Eternal Life," as an evidence of this fact? Every body else understands by it, that the Saviour meant to convince the young man of his besetting sin of avarice, and therefore required of him the surrender of the object of his idolatry as the only means of salvation,—an individual case, which is here made out as an injunction to be complied with by all. And what can be more absurd than the statement that the rich man was damned "for no sin but that he was rich"—i. e., that he would not divide out his wealth, and make it common property; and that Lazarus was saved for no reason "save that he was poor"? We ask any candid man to read the account of this case in the New Testament, and see if there is any such interpretation admissible. It would be unworthy of a serious reply, save that the insufferable irreverence, which this infidel writer manifests in this passage for the character of the Divine Redeemer, calls upon us to defend the true principles of His religion. The rich man had a multitude of other sins besides his wealth, and they were all, no doubt, aggravated and intensified by the very luxury in which his wealth permitted him to live.

And, to mention no other, there was the glaring one of a want of charity towards the miserable Lazarus at his gate, left to the compassion of dogs. As to what he says about Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon being slaveholders, even if it is true, we find in this fact no evidence "that revivalist fervor is by no means conducive to clearness of moral perception, and consequently to the highest moral conduct." Whitefield's owning fifty slaves, and bequeathing them to Lady Huntingdon at his death, may, on the contrary, be the result of the highest Christian philanthropy. His journal shows conclusively that the salvation of the slaves lay very near his heart, and the simple fact of his owning them, only gave him a more favorable opportunity of laboring for their souls, since thus no one save himself could control them, and prevent him from teaching them the way of salvation. And hence, very naturally, when he was about to leave them himself, his thoughts turned to "that lady elect, that Mother in Israel, that mirror of true and undefiled religion," Lady Huntingdon, as one who, having the means, would also use them to take care of those slaves. This writer, however, no doubt belongs to the Anti-Slavery Abolition party, who regard all slaveholders as unmitigated sinners, fit only to be punished with the fires of eternal wrath. We cannot, therefore, spend further time with him in arguing this point, as it would be all lost labor. The last matter of noticeable character in his article, is the qualified gratification he expresses at the moral changes produced by the Irish Revival. He admits, because he is obliged to do it, that "drinking, licentiousness, wife-beating, and numerous other crimes, have greatly diminished," etc., but after expressing his belief that these reforms will prove transient, he raises the question, whether the advantages thus derived are of sufficient value to counterbalance the evils, mental and physical, which revivals usually induce. He decides in favor of "religious fanaticism," rather than "blank apathetic ignorance," "if com-

pelled to the painful choice," because even "poor, well-meaning fanatics, who trust themselves to the flickering and ever-varying light of religious frenzy," may guide humanity "a little way out of the dark valley of *intellectual* death."

We, however, do not accept his expressions of gratification at the results he enumerates, as awakening within us the slightest sympathy. We should set aside all the whole system of revivals, if we could see in them nothing more than this writer sees, viz: "revival frenzies," working upon the ignorant, the superstitious and debased, to raise them, "at least one degree in the scale of *intellectual being*." It is because we see in them (and only when we do see in them) the power of the Divine Spirit, enlightening the understanding in the knowledge of the truth of God, and renewing their wills, and persuading and enabling them "to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to them in the Gospel," and thus by the influence of faith, uniting them to Christ, causing them to walk in newness of life, and to show an entire renovation of their principles of action in all the relations which they sustain to the world around them; it is for these causes that we rejoice in revivals, and bless God for them, and not because of the unexpected effect which he says is wrought by them, in elevating the lowest class *intellectually*. Religion does, it is true, improve, refine, and enlarge the intellect, but it does this by filling the soul with views of God, eternity, and everlasting life, and thus dissipating its native darkness and ignorance.

We wish to say, as we draw near the conclusion of this paper, that two things are quite clear to our minds, on a deliberate review of this article: 1. The writer is a bitter infidel, who has seized the occasion of the recent religious movement in America and Britain, to pour out all his venom on the Christian religion. Hence his artful array of authority to show that the Bible is obsolete; hence his enumeration of difficulties in the way of becoming a

Christian ; hence his dwelling so eagerly upon the extravagances attendant upon some of these revivals, and his spiteful malevolence and slanderous malignity exhibited towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and his most devoted and eminent followers. 2. He either has no adequate conception of a true revival, or designedly confounds it with fanaticism and superstitious zeal. We think that there is truth in both suppositions ; he is partly incapable of appreciating true revivals, and partly wilful in misrepresenting them.

It remains now only briefly to add our views as to what constitutes a genuine revival of religion—its nature and results—as distinguished from a spurious religious excitement. This need not occupy much time, as we have, in the progress of this discussion, already intimated the outline of our belief on this subject.

The word revival implies two things. 1. That there is a principle of life, which from some cause has become latent and dormant. 2. That this principle of life has by some powerful influence been roused again into energetic action. Now, applying these two principles to the Christian religion, it is found that they meet their illustration in its operation upon individual hearts, and thus through them upon the state of religion in communities. A Christian has within him a principle of spiritual life ; but, under the influence of worldly causes pressing upon him, the spark of vital godliness often becomes buried, and very slightly operative upon him.

But the Spirit of God moves upon him, and by a variety of means and secondary causes awakens his slumbering heart to new zeal, energy and activity in the cause of Christ. It may be affliction ; or it may be losses, crosses, or disappointments that arouse him ; or it may be the blessed ordinances of the sanctuary. But whatever it be, the result is a revival in his own soul. Again, a Christian community, a Church, having the undoubted possession of the true faith, has, under the influence of external circum

stances, yielded to the insidious suggestions of spiritual sloth, and a dearth of the fruits of the Spirit ensues, and a dreary desolation seems to have blighted the prospect. But God sends, in His providence, some agency—a fervent ministry, it may be, or a lay missionary, or a devout elder, and a few faithful praying people, who become the instruments of breaking the torpor, and the Church is revived, and sinners, in answer to prayer, and “by the foolishness of preaching,” are convicted and converted, and “multitudes are added to the Church of such as shall be saved.” That such awakenings should be accompanied by some spurious work is what might be anticipated from the fact that men, imperfect men, are the agents in conducting them. But, nevertheless, there need be no difficulty in discerning between the true and the false. We have a sure and infallible standard to which we may bring these revivals, and that is God’s Holy Word. By that they must stand or fall. “Sanctify them through thy truth—thy Word is truth.” All the results of a genuine revival must, therefore, correspond with those, which, in the Word of God are pointed out as the legitimate fruits of God’s truth. And in deciding this matter we must inquire,

1. What doctrines are taught in these revivals?
2. What is the experience of the subjects of these revivals?
3. What moral effects have succeeded?

1. As to the doctrines taught. These must be, in one comprehensive phrase—the doctrines of grace. Unless the preaching, under the influence of which any revival is enjoyed, be deeply imbued with these doctrines, “it may safely be pronounced a spurious revival.” No conversion may be trusted which is not effected by the Spirit of God, blessing the truth of God to the soul of the sinner. That comprehensive word, *truth*, is a sublime system revealed to us in God’s Word, and consists of the great doctrines of native depravity; the necessity of the new birth by the

Spirit, in order to the possibility of salvation and holy living; effectual calling; justification by faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ; repentance unto life; faith in Jesus Christ; the saints' final perseverance, and the abiding, consoling, and joyful indwelling of the Holy Spirit. A revival of religion, succeeding such preaching as is implied in such an outline of doctrine, will manifest itself to be of a truth from God, and its effects will be such as will honor God and promote His glory. It is not to be doubted, however, that such views are ignored by many who figure in the fashionable periodical excitements of this day, which are called by them revivals. They object to doctrinal preaching very strenuously. They approve of nothing but fervent, vociferous, ranting exhortation. The plan of salvation is never explained. The appeal is made, and the anxious are called on, and sometimes forced, to come forward to "the altar of prayer," without instruction, and the result is, many professions of religion—"bright professions,"—are made, based on no proper knowledge of their relations to God, or of the exercise of faith in Christ. Hence it has grown into a proverb, especially in this South-Western region, that the converts of this season must be converted over again at the next. We conclude, therefore, that we must lay down, as chief among the criteria of our judgment as to the genuineness of a revival, the fact that the preaching dispensed be deeply doctrinal.

2. As to the experience of the subjects of the revival, this of course varies in its "distinctness and strength, the rapidity of succession, modifications and combinations." But, as there is a substantial uniformity in the experience of all true Christians, so the professed converts must realize the characteristics of the true Christian's experience in their own hearts, or the work wrought on them must be rejected as spurious. Is not this reasonable? Is it not in accordance with the principles which govern all other systems?

How do we know that any man is sound in regard to any political question, unless, by conversing with him, or communing with him in his written records of opinion and sentiment, we find that he speaks and writes so as to tally exactly with the true standard of soundness? So in religion, there is a sympathy—a uniformity of experience—which marks all Christians. If, then, we desire to know the condition of a professed convert, let us ascertain whether there has been a conviction of sin experienced, a sense of guilt, and of a want of holiness, a desire to be free from the love, power, and pollution, as well as from the penalty due to sin; a clear view of God's plan of mercy through Christ; a full and hearty assent to and acceptance of the scheme of redemption; an entire trust in Christ for restoration to the favor of God, all accompanied by the indulgence of a hope, more or less bright, of personal salvation. Now, it is not to be supposed that every convert is a systematic theologian. But that he has an experience of the foregoing principles operating upon his heart and life, is beyond all doubt. And unless men who profess to be converted, are possessed of this experience, in a clearer or more obscure degree, there is great reason to fear that they are not "able to give a reason for the hope that is in them;" and it is almost impossible for an enlightened Christian to avoid feeling, with all the charity he may possess, that he stands in doubt of such cases. The many instances of apostacy which are seen succeeding certain religious excitements, in modern times, would be found, on investigation, among those who are strangers to this form of experience.

3. The third element in the discussion of the nature of a revival, is the consideration of the results which succeed—the fruits brought forth in the subjects. Now, it is readily perceived, here, that this is the most satisfactory proof of the genuineness of any supposed work of Grace in any community. For, while it is true that the experience of

all Christians is uniform and identical in its grand outlines, yet it is, after all, impossible to form, at all times and in all cases, correct judgments in regard to the state of the heart, from the mere narrative of the experience. We may misunderstand them—they may be deluded—they may be hypocrites. It is God alone who can judge the heart. But the great Teacher has laid down for us an infallible rule: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Let us ask, have "the formal become spiritual; the proud, humble; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate; the worldly, heavenly-minded; the extortioner, just; the self-seeker, desirous to promote God's glory?" Do the professed converts love the Bible, and the Lord's Day, and His people, and His house, and His cause? Do they daily strive to cease from evil,—have "old things passed away, and all things become new,"—do they show forth their works with meekness of wisdom, and let their light shine around them to the glory of God? If these things be in them and abound, they prove that it is a genuine work that has been wrought upon them. And in connection with this, we may just add, that with these three characteristics of a revival, although there may be mingled some bodily affections and extravagances, while these should not be encouraged, it is certain that the work is genuine, and these accompaniments are entirely non-essential. They are not the results of religious feeling so much as of the effects of the excitement of the nervous system operated upon by fear, or a vivid imagination. But the fact that, amid all else that may be connected with it, these three marks—sound doctrine, Christian experience, and evangelical practice—characterize a revival, is proof of the most satisfactory character that it is the work of God's Holy Spirit.

In looking at the attitude which those assume who, like the writer now under review, confound all religious earnestness and spiritual fervor with frenzy, who view all pretensions to vital godliness as the result of ignorance or priest-

craft, who devote their whole life to sneering and ridicule, and defamation of God's Word and system of Grace, we cannot forbear the indulgence of a feeling of sorrow and commiseration. The prostitution, to such base uses, of noble powers furnished them by the very Being whom they thus dishonor, cannot but be a source of sadness to the thoughtful observer. There is, however, another reflection which arises from a view of such cases. It is, that while all their efforts to disparage the system of Christianity are futile, and every intelligent man regards them as absurd and altogether unworthy a rational being, the irresistible march of Divine Truth—the glorious Gospel of the blessed God—is conquering the world. These men are left far behind—their assaults are impotent, their weapons are pointless. There is no obstacle to the onward progress of Christ's Kingdom which can for a moment retard its advance. And while the mighty work of the Spirit is convincing and converting men all over the earth, and hastening on the Latter-Day Glory, the spectacle presented by the skeptic, vainly attempting to weaken the faith of men in God's blessed Word, would excite derision and contempt on any subject less solemn. But it is with sincere commiseration for their sad condition, that we venture to address to them the stern language of Paul: "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Acts xiii. : 40, 41.