

NEW FRUITS

FROM AN

OLD FIELD.

BY

EPHER WHITAKER,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH, SOUTHOLD, L. I.

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P R E F A C E .

THE sheaf herewith presented to the public has been gathered together, within a few months past, amid the incessant activities of a laborious pastorate. It is bound up in this form with the hope that the hours which have been given to it may thus produce more permanent fruits than would otherwise spring from them. And the thought is cherished, that any one who addresses the public at all, may use the press, in these days, without incurring any severe obligation to apologize for it.

The field which imparts its qualities to this sheaf has been under cultivation ever since October 21, 1640—the date of the organization of the First Church of Southold, to which the writer has been providentially called to minister in the gospel during the last fourteen years, and for which he gratefully performs the duties of his office. These New Fruits from this Old Field are now offered to the public, with a desire thereby to serve a larger circle; to

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gratify many personal friends and acquaintances ; and especially to gain facilities for the further investigation of the history of this place, and particularly of its Christian culture for the last two centuries and a quarter.

The publication of the present volume is made convenient to the writer by the liberality of a friend, whose generous interest is ever active in the history and welfare of his native town.

EPHER WHITAKER.

Southold, L. I., July 26, 1865.

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I.

Education for Success in Life.

"A man hath great use and need of Justice, and all the instances of Morality serve his natural and political ends."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

THE scientific cultivator who desires to nourish the growth and reap the fruits of any plant whose production he is about to undertake, will first of all analyze its structure, and thoroughly ascertain its constituents. He will determine the elements which compose its substance, and are essential to its development, maturity and perfection. He brings into view whatever is requisite beneath the genial air and the quickening sun-light to produce "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." He also analyzes the soil whence the plant must draw the heavier part of its sustenance, and gains an exact knowledge of its various ingredients. He compares its nutrient elements with those which are needful for the highest prosperity of the plant in its various stages of growth, from the tender germ to the full-ripe seed. He adds to the soil any essential properties or fertilizing materials which it may lack ; and he does this, so far as he is able, according to the relative ad-

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vancement of the plant. In this way he supplies the growing organism with those various alimentary substances which it needs in the successive steps of its progress from germination to maturity.

He also keeps in view the end of the cultivation. If his object is to produce hay, fodder or fibre only, he withholds from the plant those elements which enter not into its stalk and blades, but contribute merely to the production of its seed. But, on the other hand, should he wish to bring forth the precious grain to perfection, he carefully supplies the best elements for the purpose.

All this is closely analogous to the proper culture of the human soul for the greatest fruitfulness in life. For all sound mental culture requires, first of all, a thorough analysis of that vital growing organism whose fruits are above all price. How can any one properly and successfully educate the human mind without an intimate and exact knowledge of its nature? Does not the best education always keep in view *the subject* whose culture, development and fruitfulness it undertakes to promote? But this is not enough. It is necessary to know what facts, principles and sentiments are requisite for the growth and advancement of the soul, and how these must be supplied for the development and maturity of the vital organism. Furthermore, *the end* of the cultivation must control the whole process. The field of corn may be cultivated to produce merely fodder for cattle, or the husbandman may put forth his activity to ob-

tain food for his own household. There are also diverse methods of education ; and such culture may be given to the mind as will cause it to produce mainly leaves ; or it may receive such nurture and training as will make it yield substantial fruits. It is plain, therefore, that all proper and sound education must keep *the object* of the process ever in view.

There are, it is true, certain common advantages to be gained, whatever may be the specific object which is more particularly chosen as the prize to be won.

Such a method of education should be pursued, in every case, as to form the habit of careful attention to both external and internal phenomena. In this way the memory should be strengthened, enlarged and trained to regularity and readiness. The imagination should be made to feel the curb, the spur, or the gentle rein, so as to improve its natural disposition, and cause it to move according to the requirements of good taste. The understanding should be taught both the extent and the limits of its own powers ; for it should not, on the one hand, be unprofitably or injuriously occupied in fruitless gropings beyond its sphere ; nor, on the other, be fettered in its course over the wide field which is ever open for the display and use of its powers. The judgment should be exercised in the determination of those questions, the only practical ones, whose probabilities vary and incline to the one side or to the other, with every degree or measure of support. The conscience should be trained to distinguish most

accurately between right and wrong, and to maintain its rightful supremacy over all the other powers.

A very general analysis of education gives us, indeed, three main elements, namely: government, instruction and training. And these are, in truth, rather divisions of a subject than elements of a compound. For the government may be dissolved into the diverse elements, physical and moral; and the instruction embraces three constituents—scientific, ethical and religious; while the training should be corporeal as well as mental.

This analysis, in many a case, is not sufficiently particular and exhaustive to answer our purpose in education. We must often pursue it farther; and, as to physical government, determine its time, place and degree. So, also, as to moral government, we must ascertain its method, means and end. In the same way we may see that scientific instruction comprehends many simpler elements in literature, art and philosophy; for here we must not only regard objects themselves, but also manifold theories concerning them. Ethical instruction, in like manner, must keep in view not only the duties of every man to himself, in body and soul, but also his numerous relations and obligations to his fellow men. The doctrines and the duties of religion, both natural and revealed, present more than one element and theme for religious instruction. The training of the body, in the process of education, should seek more than mere health and soundness. It should aim to endow the whole system

with all the strength and dexterity which are needful in the practical pursuits of life. And mental training should have reference to facility, accuracy and elegance in the employment of the mind.

If education is a growth, a development, the unfolding of a germ, like the gradual expansion and manifold enlargement of an acorn into an oak, then the analysis of our subject is presented in this noble forest tree, with its grand trunk, main branches, smaller limbs, lighter spray, and myriad leaves.

Hence the full and symmetrical education of any person requires attention and application to many particulars, in order, and in their various relations; and for this reason the education of any youth requires the instruction and guidance of competent teachers. He needs government, tuition and training. He cannot be properly taught and trained without government. And it is not enough to teach him, unless he is also trained to the use of his own powers. He must, of course, feel the influence of his teachers, and his education must proceed according to their ideas; for every teacher, either consciously or unconsciously, is more or less under the control of his own philosophy and principles in all his methods and measures of education. There is no comprehensive method which the extreme sensationalist and the extreme idealist can pursue in common. And one or another class of motives will rule both teacher and pupil according as the main object of education is thought to be a mere temporary advantage, or an inherent eternal good. If

the teacher holds that man's chief end is to get and keep some possession here for a few years, he will educate his pupil accordingly. But, on the contrary, if he believes it to be more important that a man should be fitted for a career of endless blessedness than to acquire any amount of worldly wealth and honor, then his creed will create and energize a far different method of education. Hence his opinions as well as his character must greatly influence his pupil. For, in most cases, a man's unconscious influence is his most effective influence. Men commonly do not what they would, but what they can accomplish; and a man's ability depends, in many a case, as much upon his opinions as upon any other possession, physical or mental. For the business and commerce of the world move forward on the wheels of faith. The opinions of men control them in buying and selling—in sailing ships and running cars—in gaining wealth and prizing honor—in making friends and forming all the most tender and important relations of life.

You cannot draw forth, unfold, enlarge, strengthen and direct the natural faculties of the soul without the use of words, facts, principles and aims; and the language, literature, science, sentiment and philosophy which you should employ, must depend upon the end which you desire to reach. Education, for its own sake, is the movement of a childish toy, which spins round and round in its own narrow circle. Such a movement can satisfy only a narrow mind. This is not the view of education which rose before the eye

of John Milton when he said, "I am long since persuaded that to say or do aught worth memory or imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us than simply the love of God and of mankind. The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our soul of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection."

It may seem to many, especially at the first glance, that this high end is not the object which our education should seek. There is a popular notion that our chief end is to subdue and rule the outer world ; to bridge the sea with all the ships of commerce ; to rib the land with iron bands ; to bind the continents together with telegraphic nerves ; to measure the depths of the ocean, and mark out all its currents ; to ascertain the courses of the winds and the circuits of the storms ; to map the heavens and measure the stars ; to disclose the secrets of nature ; to expound the fossils of ante-human ages ; to make all the powers of earth, and air, and sea most serviceable to accomplish our own imperious will ; to subdue the fertile soil to the action of the plough ; to mine the mountains and convert their boundless wealth to the uses of man ; to build dwellings and cities for human habitations ; to guide the destinies of States ; to found a nation on the freest principles and the surest basis ; and to frame an example in arts and arms, in government

and commerce, in wealth and prosperity, for the empires of the world.

It is vastly desirable to accomplish these great secular enterprises. But how can this be done most readily and effectually? For this purpose shall we forget that man is greater than all his works? A truth of inspiration is, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." To accomplish great works for agriculture, commerce, art and arms, we need men of the most thorough moral culture—men who are able and ready to help the race forward in its course toward its highest end and best attainments. To impart this culture we must use words, thoughts, sentiments, methods, principles and motives which tend to these results. And that education which, in the main, is most essential to success in this life is, under the divine providence, also favorable to "whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report"—for success in life commonly rests on the moral virtues. Mere intellectual and physical endowments cannot give it. Firm health and family influence can only afford a vantage ground to win the prize. These, moreover, and many other qualities and possessions in which men differ, are less under the control of education than those principles of rectitude, integrity, honor, industry, patience and perseverance, which form a character of high moral

excellence. And this character is not the fruit of mere intellectual culture. History saw philosophy most fruitful and art peerless in Greece and Rome while Greeks and Romans were sinking in moral corruption. More recent nations have shown us similar examples. And all the records of the past inculcate and illustrate the truth that permanent prosperity must rest on moral grounds. If Cæsar displayed the graces of the well-bred citizen, he more conspicuously exhibited the virtues of the temperate, energetic, courageous, indomitable soldier, who "thought nothing done while any thing remained to be done." The contrast between him and his most famous cotemporary is sharpest at this very point of moral character. Cicero has taught us that yielding to misfortunes, or bearing them weakly, is an infirmity of mind, whereby men have brought ruin upon themselves, their relatives and friends, and even upon their country. But history affords no such case of infirmity more conspicuous than his own. In his first oration against Cataline, he said: "*Jam me ipsum inertiae nequitiaeque condemno;*" and the remissness and worthlessness which he thus charged upon himself, and which he again and again displayed in the course of his life, and in the hour of his death, were manifestly due to his want of moral character and moral courage. He could divorce his wife and marry his ward for the sake of her fortune, and then discard her also; but he could not stand before the wrath of Clodius, nor strike a blow for Pompey at Pharsalia, nor do any

thing more than stretch out his neck to receive the strokes of his own former slave, sent by Antony to take off his head, at his Formian villa. He had no high moral character ; no solidity of principle ; no inflexibility of purpose ; no resolute courage. He failed, as King Saul had done in another age and land, for the want of those great moral qualities which are, in most cases, the foundation of success in life. His proficiency in the philosophy of morals could not supply his lack of moral principle and motive.

The culture of Cicero was unlike the education of Calvin, and the fruits were unlike in the two cases. Both fell upon stormy times. Both were more than once exiles. But the moral elements in, one were disastrously weak ; in the other invincibly strong. Hence it was that Calvin became the most influential man of his day. Though the civil government pronounced against him, and the people in the street shouted, "Slay the alien ;" yet he quailed not before all the power and populace of Geneva, for his character was formed by the Word of God. And hence the teachings of no other reformer have shaped so many minds, and entered into the history of so many nations. They ruled the counsels and strengthened the hands of the Genevese ; they gave heroism to the Huguenots of France ; they made their power felt in some of the German States ; they imparted courage and persistency to the patriots of the Netherlands ; they spread their influence to the cabinet and the Church of England ; they changed the whole course

of Scotland's history ; they formed a seed-plot in the north of Ireland ; they crossed the ocean with the pilgrims of the Mayflower ; they entered largely into the mental, and moral and religious life of the new world ; not in New England only, but also in most of the Atlantic colonies, whence they have spread more or less over all our land ; they are streaming all abroad wherever British colonies flourish on the face of the globe ; and they reach no place where they do not foster moral culture, and so promote intellectual improvement. For moral culture invigorates the mind ; fosters industry, economy, the best use of time, and gives that invincible energy which men of pure and lofty motives are wont to display. But no man's intellectual power, however great, can give him, apart from moral excellence, the assurance of success. We may expect the racer without bottom to fail before he can reach the end of the course. So mere mental talents and attainments often fall short of the prize. The sun of Napoleon went down at noon, for the passions of glory and dominion ruled his heart. Washington did not thus hasten to his setting ; and even when that resplendent orb left the world at last, it threw a glory over both earth and sky ; for high moral purposes were the motives and law of his beneficent action ; and it is from the moral qualities of his character that it ever more derives its matchless power.

Bancroft gives us a vivid picture of the Mayflower's shallop in a storm of snow and rain : "The sea swells ;

the rudder breaks ; the boat must now be steered with oars ; the storm increases ; night is at hand ; to reach the harbor before dark, as much sail as possible is borne ; the mast breaks in three pieces ; the sail falls overboard ; but the tide is favorable. The pilot, in dismay, would have run the boat on shore in a cove full of breakers. 'About with her !' exclaimed a sailor ; 'or we are cast away !' They get her about immediately, and, passing over the surf, they enter a fair sound, and shelter themselves under the lea of a small rise of land. It is dark, and the rain beats furiously ; yet the men are so wet, and cold, and weak, they slight the danger to be apprehended from the savages, and, after great difficulty, kindle a fire on the shore. Morning, as it dawned, showed the place to be a small island within the entrance of a harbor. The day was required for rest and preparations. Time was precious ; the season advancing ; their companions were left in suspense. The next day was the Christian Sabbath ! Nothing marks the character of the Pilgrims more fully than that they kept it sacredly, though every consideration demanded haste."* Not till Monday would this exploring party of the forefathers set foot on the mainland at Plymouth. No preciousness of time ; no approach of ice-bound winter ; no fear of savage cruelty ; no suspense of absent companions on board the ship could overcome their high moral character, and induce

* History, vol 1, Chap.8, pp. 312, 313.

them, for present advantage, to make a breach of the "Christian Sabbath."

Their education had imparted and strengthened moral principles fit to command success in life—such principles as in our own day guided the conduct of Amos Lawrence and Anson G. Phelps, and in another age and land made Daniel a statesman of high position, life-long power, and wide and permanent influence.

Moral fruits, therefore, must be sought, in education, even more carefully than intellectual attainments ; for moral excellence confers the greatest advantages in the long run. More than any mere mental culture, it gives assurance of success in life, and its fruits thus advance national prosperity, wealth and power. Individuals and nations are always in danger of speedy ruin without it. Hence all proper education must supply fit elements to form this high moral character ; for the laws of vegetable life, action and assimilation are not more invariable than the laws of the human mind. And all human words, thoughts, sentiments and principles, as well as all associations, which are permitted to act freely, according to their own natural operation, invariably produce their legitimate effects. Mathematical studies form the mind to reason closely and judge exactly, and the contemplation of pure and elevating sentiments and truths naturally tends to habitual purity of thought and excellence of action. But no momentary glance nor infrequent observation can secure the best results. Whatever requires no study, training, nor effort, is worthless. The

cost generally measures the value of an acquisition. Even virtue itself is the offspring of trial. Hence Ximena, in the "Siege of Valencia," fails not to say :

" Strength is born
In the deep silence of long-suffering hearts,
Not amidst joy."

And to improve, strengthen and elevate the moral powers, the instructions of the Great Teacher, and of those whom He inspired, should be studied as diligently as mathematics and logic are pursued to improve the rational faculties. For the Bible is better than moral science to produce moral fruits. Cicero was a moral philosopher of no mean attainments, but in moral excellence and moral courage he could not stand on the same elevation with Carver, Bradford, Winslow and Standish, who most successfully kept that Christian Sabbath on the bleak and barren island of Plymouth harbor the day before they landed on that rocky shore, which their footsteps made famous and almost holy to liberty, virtue and religion. The facts, sentiments, principles and motives which were used to form their moral character should be employed in the whole process of education. Every teacher should lead his pupils daily to the candid and careful study of the Bible, in order to form in their souls those high moral qualities of rectitude, integrity, courage, fortitude, patience, perseverance, courtesy, industry and frugality which are most essential to success in life. For the Bible is not only a good book to teach

us how we may die well and safely, but it is also the *best* book to teach us how we may live most happily and successfully in this busy world. The young especially should lodge its precepts in their memory, and cause its spirit to dwell and rule in their heart. They should welcome it as a kind, and wise, and faithful friend, perfectly fit to impart the most noble and purifying sentiments, the most important and desirable knowledge, and the most serviceable and practical wisdom ; in a word, to lead them in the ways of pleasantness and peace to worth, success and honor.

II.

The Power and Worth of Biblical Knowledge.

"I could do religion and my country no better service for the time, than doing my utmost endeavor to recall the people of God from this vain foraging after straw, and to reduce them to their firm stations under the standard of the Gospel."—JOHN MILTON.

THE Bible contains boundless resources of truth, goodness, beauty, holiness and power. Its scope is wider than the earth, and its influence more enduring than time. Its author is God ; its subject the creation, history, redemption and destiny of man ; its object the divine glory in the present, future and eternal welfare of our race. Chillingworth, in his invincible argument for "a Safe Way to Salvation," nowhere rises to a loftier height than in this noble utterance : "The Bible, I say ; the Bible only is the religion of Protestants !" This most eloquent section of his discourse closes with these words : "I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore that men ought not to require any more of any man than this, to believe the Scripture to be God's word, to endeavor to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it."*

* Part 1, Chap. 6, Sec. 56. Second edition. London, 1638.

This is enough to renew the face of the earth, for great is the power and worth of Bible knowledge.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The man who knows this fact is immeasurably in advance of all who know it not. It is almost another world in which he dwells. The case is the same as to the trial and fall of man in Eden; the unity and universal depravity of the race through descent from one guilty pair; the promise of the Saviour, as the seed of the woman, and His appearance in the fulness of time as the Son of God; the origin and worth of sacrifices; and many other wide and mighty customs among the early nations of the earth.

Let us bear in mind, then, that the Bible makes known the eternal existence and infinite perfections of God. It reveals His character and attributes, and the mystery of the Godhead as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It gives us the knowledge of His unchangeableness, and shows us the One Being with whom there is no shadow of turning—who is for ever the same, and in every place, beholding the evil and the good, looking with favor upon the righteous and hating the wicked. This is the source of our knowledge that God is more and better than all-wise, mighty, just and true; that He is infinitely good and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, through the provisions of His unspeakable grace. The Bible makes known what are these divine and most gracious provisions, and how they have been used, abused or neglected among men from the dawn of the world's history down

to the fulness of time for their completion through the coming of Christ and the gift of the Spirit with power among the nations.

It is the Bible that shows God to be our Creator, Upholder, Lawgiver, Redeemer and Judge. Take away this light and we have no safe guide in the way of duty to ourselves, to our fellow men, or to our Maker. Destroy this book and we know not the pathway of life. We cannot even see the door of escape from the sin which we feel within us—from that mass of corruption ever clinging to us, and we cry out in vain, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

For it is the Bible only that makes known the divine, all-gracious and all-sufficient Saviour; shows us the way of holiness; presents the terms of pardon, and holds forth to rebels the unspeakable rewards of reconciliation with God.

Furthermore, the Bible gives us the true philosophy of the world's history. It shows us the chief causes and the highest ends of the grandest movements in the career of the mightiest nations, for thousands of years. In this way it makes the past shed light upon both the present and the future. It discloses the goal to which all human history is tending; and, in the great end which it reveals, gives us attractive forces of the most transcendent and elevating power. It makes known a coming age of long duration, when the knowledge of the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea—when war shall

cease among all nations—when the right shall rule, and God shall reign in every human heart.

The Bible makes us sure that corruption will put on incorruption ; that all who are in the graves will hear the voice of God and come forth ; and that after the judgment of the last day, the soul and body will be immortal in bliss or woe, according as the awards of infinite justice reveal the character of every man.

It is the Bible that most clearly makes known our probation here for good or evil in the endless future not only, but also gives us the assurance that “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” It is the Bible that marks out the whole way of salvation which divine mercy has opened before us, according to the unchanging and eternal plan of the infinite Jehovah. It is this same Word of Truth that guides the footsteps of the sinner who walks in the narrow way from sin to holiness, through that faith in the Son of God which saves the soul, overcomes the world, works by love, purifies the heart, and brings forth all the fruits of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, righteousness and every other Christian grace.

It is God’s Book which imparts to us the knowledge of the best motives, rules and examples for all virtuous, generous and pious sentiments, words and actions. It is full of the instruction which life inculcates ; and whether it sketches the life of Joseph or Jesus, of David or Daniel, of Jehu or Judas, it does it

to the life. It shows the real character. It gives us the knowledge of truth, and not of falsehood. One man writes history to promote liberty—another to advance science—a third to support monarchy—and a fourth to favor the government of the people. Others write in behalf of some theory of art, or education, or some form of religion or culture. Hence their writings are warped, partial and unreliable. They do not give us pure truth. How great is the advantage of the Bible here! “For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Bible, then, gives us the most important knowledge in respect to all the chief interests of men. It gives us the most efficient knowledge to purify and elevate the individual, and to improve and advance society. It is the foundation which supports all true science, all benign art, all good government, all progressive civilization, all spiritual religion. It is the knowledge which the Bible gives that confers such immense superiority upon Christian nations, as compared with the heathen world which lieth in wickedness. This knowledge is power of the highest kind, for it contains moral elements which are most fit and efficient to move the human soul. And, though the force of biblical knowledge is resisted at every step, yet it shows its mighty power from age to age over wider and wider regions, and in the most precious interests of humanity.

It overcomes the obstacles of selfishness and ignorance ; hoary heathen usages ; barbarous and oppressive customs ; wilful and despotic governments ; false and fanatical religions ; and so it prepares the way for every man to enjoy the right of " life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness " with all those advantages which come from pure morals, high intelligence and great control over the powers of nature.

Thus, in many lands, the Bible has imparted that knowledge which shows its power in casting down many a false system of philosophy ; changing religion from the dread and worship of impure and malignant powers into the service of the holy and infinite God ; breaking the rods of despots, and establishing governments of law ; doing away slavery, and making provisions for the unfortunate, whether blind, deaf, dumb, lunatic, idiotic or imbecile ; banishing barbarous sports and building hospitals ; subduing the horrors of war by ten thousand ministries of charity, and establishing those principles of Christian brotherhood which will at length cause wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. For the knowledge which the Bible imparts is not the possession of man in the way that a person owns the clothes which he wears. It does not change his outward appearance only. He does not cast it aside as old, useless or unlike the fashion of the hour. It becomes his own, like the blood in his veins, which pervades every part of his system, and gives life, and strength and color to the whole.

Did you ever consider how a man's biblical know-

ledge permeates all his faculties, inspires all his powers, and unites with all his mental possessions? Suppose you take away from any man all the knowledge which the Bible has given him respecting God—His eternity ; His trinity and unity ; His holiness ; His immensity ; His omniscience ; His justice ; His unchangeableness ; His mercy ; His truth and His power. Suppose you withdraw from this man all that the Bible has taught him respecting God's creation of the earth, with man to possess it, and subdue it, and make all the powers of nature serve for our welfare. Suppose you deprive him of all his Bible-given knowledge of the fall of man and the consequence of that sin, and of the whole Bible history from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, and from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to David. Now, in all these great forming periods of the world—in many respects the most interesting periods of the world—you have not one word of written history outside of the divine Book. Go back into the past as far as you can without the Bible, to find some key to unlock the mystery and the ignorance which imprison you in darkness, and what is the result? "You are plunged into the midst of a state of affairs of whose origin you know nothing, and where the mind wanders in perfect night, and can find no rest. Kingdoms are seen, but no one can tell when or how they were founded. Cities appear whose origin no one knows. Heroes are playing their parts in the great and mysterious drama, but no one knows whence they came and what are their de-

signs. A race of beings is seen whose origin is unknown, and the past periods of whose existence on the earth no one can determine—a race formed no one can tell for what purpose nor by what hand. Vast multitudes of beings are suffering and dying for causes which no one can explain; a generation in their own journey to the grave tread over the monuments of extinct generations, and with the memorials of fearful changes and convulsions in the past all around them, of which no one can give an account.”* But no knowledge of kingdoms, cities, arts and arms—of the revolutions and dispersions of the race—no, not even the source of its mortality and the causes of its fierce upheavals, can be the most important knowledge which the Holy Book bestows upon us. Take away from this man all knowledge of the Messiah—all the types and prophecies that come before Him—all the lines of historic developments which centre in Him—all the wondrous truth and wisdom which fall from His lips—all the words of divine compassion and almighty power that come from His hands. But stop not here. We have not yet taken away this man’s best knowledge. Deprive him of all that he knows respecting the way of salvation—man’s redemption by the obedience and death of the Son of God—all that is contained in the early promise of the Saviour; the priestly character and mission of the patriarchs; the rites and sacrifices of the Mosaic dis-

*Albert Barnes’ “Way of Life.”

pensation ; the instructions of the prophets ; the clearer teachings of our Lord and His apostles ; the power of His resurrection ; the influence of His Spirit ; and the example of His followers in the apostolic age of His Church.

But you have not yet taken away from this man, your neighbor, all his Bible knowledge. Go on in your work of deprivation. Strip him of all God's Word has taught him as to the progress of Christ's kingdom in the past and the future ; its power to make Jew and Gentile, bond and free, all one in Christ Jesus ; its sure possession of the earth in the end ; the close of the world's history ; the resurrection of all the dead ; the general judgment, and the retribution which will follow it, in the body and soul of every man according to his character and relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you say that the man deprived of all this knowledge has had the foundation taken away from his whole intellectual and moral structure—that he has had the heart, and veins, and all the blood vessels taken out of the body of his knowledge ? Do you say that there is nothing left in him to give him intellectual life and animation, nothing to elevate and inspire him ? Is it plain that his present is hopeless and his future darkness ? And do you perceive that he has become a heathen—that he is bereft of his best resources and possessions ?

Be it so. What follows ? Surely this : every man needs the Bible.

For we must consider the kind as well as the amount of the knowledge which the Bible gives. I do not undervalue those intellectual stores which men derive from the works of God in creation and providence. The Bible inculcates our duty to possess the earth and subdue it; and all the forward steps in the advancement of physical science, useful arts, good government, true religion and general improvement for the comfort and welfare of all classes, proceed from the influence of the Bible upon the individual soul, and so upon all human society. But mere secular and material improvements in the progress of natural science and mechanical arts can bestow upon man no such knowledge as the Bible gives. We can live virtuously and lead useful, pious and happy lives without much knowledge of geology or astronomy. The science of the earth's crust and the laws of the stars may be unknown to a man who holds delightful and daily fellowship with the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and lives in such a way among his fellow men, as to make sure of eternal blessedness, for it is eternal life to know the living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent to be the Saviour of the world. The knowledge which the Bible gives is, therefore, not only very great in amount, but also supremely excellent in kind. If it does not rouse, and strengthen, and elevate, and purify the soul, and so give it power, and thus improve society, no other knowledge can greatly accomplish these good results. If this does not guide our feet in the way of virtue,

industry and piety, there is no other that can greatly profit us for the life that now is and for that which is to come, making us wise unto salvation.

I have walked and mused upon the shore of the deep-sounding sea, which "rolls the wild, profound, eternal base in nature's anthem." I have gazed in awe upon the wonders of Niagara, and passed beneath its rocky wall and its overwhelming flood of mighty waters. I have lived in the largest cities of the nation. I have seen the best products of its fine arts, and surveyed its greatest works of industrial improvement and scientific culture. I have traversed its strongest fortifications, and explored the factories which produce its matchless rifles and its mightiest cannon. I have witnessed the deliberations of its highest legislative bodies, and heard orators superior in eloquence to any of its living debaters. I have listened to the pleadings of its Supreme Court, and shared the hospitality of its Chief Magistrate when the presidential mansion was thronged with men eminent in political and military circles. I have turned my eye on far other scenes, and gazed with reverence upon the solemn forms of beasts and men who were embalmed in Egypt thousands of years ago. I have made a journey to see the sculptured marbles that have been dug up from their place of burial for generation after generation in the ruins of Nineveh, and looked with wonder upon the grim priests and stern warriors portrayed on the wreck of those famous palaces of the past. I have learned the noblest languages; studied

the chief sciences ; pondered the best books, and read thousands of volumes. But all the knowledge which I have gained from every source, except the Bible, is not worth that which this Holy Book has given me.

So excellent is the kind of knowledge which it imparts to every one of its readers on the face of the globe, that its value is beyond all price. It is on every page full of truth. The inexhaustible source of wisdom ; the fountain of the best poetry, philosophy and piety ; the only history of the world for more than half the period of the human race ; the only book which forms a ladder between earth and heaven, whereby we may rise from dust to Deity. It is a book which has breasted and overcome a sea of wrath, and storms of passion and persecution, more violent and mighty than all those waves of ocean that break to pieces and overwhelm the hardest rocks. It is a book which is not a beacon throwing its artificial light a little way on the great deep of eternity. It is the sun of the moral world ; the inextinguishable light of the spiritual universe.

Would you know what power its knowledge gives ? Then think of the power of light in this earthly sphere. Put out the sun, and forthwith the chief employments of men would cease. Vegetation would soon disappear. Every tree, plant and herb would die. All the grains, and every leaf and rootlet would perish. The earth would become a bare clod. The brute creation, without food, and wandering in never-ending darkness, would sink in ruin. Artificial means might

briefly extend a dreary life in men, but their faces would soon become waxen, and, in the doleful gloom, they would seem more like moving corpses than living men. And after all the fruits of the earth had utterly failed, and all domestic animals had perished together, how soon would the whole human race lack food, and be driven in dire consternation to confront universal death to the face. The horrors of darkness and starvation would be resistless, and the light of dying lamps and dying men would together cease for ever. In the rayless darkness the dying would stumble over the dead, until all had fallen. How soon would one unceasing wail pierce the shrouded skies, mournful enough, were it possible, to waken even the dull, cold ear of death ! That inextinguishable wail would arise until the last man should fall in the icy grasp of fate ; for the genial heat would depart with the light, and cold, horrid cold, would wrap the lifeless earth in a frozen shroud. The watery ways of the ocean would all congeal, and send up their cloudy vapours never more. The whole earth would be a rayless, lifeless, frozen globe. It is from unutterable horrors, and wintry death, with no resurrection of spring time, that the light of the sun every day saves us. It comes softly and in silence to open our eyelids and renew our activity every morning, and we scarcely perceive its irresistible power. And so it is with the power which comes from the knowledge of the Bible ; but it is none the less the very power which saves us from the rayless darkness, the terrible degradation, and the hopeless death of heathenism.

Would you know where and how men have made progress for the last thousand years? You have only to know where and how the Bible has spread and shown its power. Trace on the map of the world the course of advancing civilization through the centuries of the era. Does it not walk in the light which streams from God's Holy Book?

We might show how this knowledge is power in a thousand ways. Take, for instance, the power of this knowledge to elevate woman in all Bible lands. The degree of her elevation is almost the measure of the circulation and knowledge of the Word of God. The Bible appeals almost as earnestly to gallantry as it does to godliness, for its dissemination to the ends of the earth. For you can easily see the contrast between the culture and position of woman in Christian and heathen countries. In the one she is the helpmeet for man—his virtuous, intelligent and cherished companion. She is the angel of the household; the genius of order; the teacher of the young; the incentive to refinement; the minister of charity; the largest possessor of piety. In the other she is the menial of man—his lowly servant; the minister of his lust; not even allowed, nor anywise fitted to instruct her own children, but often compelled, in her feebleness, to perform the hard drudgery from which her sex alone should set her entirely free. The contrast is made by the Bible, which commends the heroic virtues less than the Christian graces, and requires husbands to love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

There is another way to show the power of the knowledge which the Bible gives. What nations accumulate wealth and enjoy comfort even in this life? Among whom does civil and religious freedom make her home? Where does the minister of religion rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, and not spurning the marriage and family relations as unholy?

Furthermore, vice, crime and misery fester, spread, corrupt and destroy, even in the midst of wealth and refinement, unless the knowledge of the Bible puts forth its power to save. There is, for instance, the great city. *There* is the greatest division of labor; the most consummate skill; the most diversified and manifold exercise of human energies. There is the greatest wealth—the choicest luxuries—the highest social culture—the most thorough polish. There flourish sciences, and arts and letters. There are noble virtues, and much worth, piety and joy. There are splendid palaces, fine paintings, costly furniture, sumptuous fare, delicious music and elegant revelry. Is this all? What else do I see there? Much that I love, but more that I hate, and most that I abhor and despise. There are the greatest vices, crimes and miseries. The greatest refinement of sensual pleasure elbows the greatest degree of want and wretchedness. The gorgeous carriage, whose lackeys shine in livery, rolls softly along by the side of the shivering, perishing beggars, whom we call mendicants, that is, speakers of lies. And there, too, within eye-shot of the most

luxurious scenes, are the victims of indolence, drunkenness and starvation, packed down in the damp and reeking cellars, and stowed away in lofty garrets where filth, sickness, ignorance and hopelessness fill up the measure of a sinful life, and wait for a most wretched mortality to pass into a more dreadful eternity. Is that the sort of society to suit you? No godless progress has power to improve it. Moral, spiritual, religious causes only can regenerate those desperately wicked and wretched hearts. To improve society you must increase reverence, faith, obedience and affection towards God; and sympathy, brotherhood, justice and love towards men. And secular knowledge cannot accomplish it. Such knowledge will make no soul holy or Satan would have been a saint long ago. He has knowledge enough. The highest mental culture in physical science will not insure the goodness of the heart. Nana Sahib passed for a well-bred Parisian in the most polished capital of Europe, and studied sciences successfully in the highest schools of France. But it is the knowledge of God's word only that can tame such a human monster. This was the strength, fortitude and joy of many of his victims.

And this fact affords the best illustration of the power which the Bible imparts. Many a man, through fear of death, is all his life time subject to bondage. Death is fearful to men who know not the Book of God. Where the Bible brings not the Resurrection and the Life unto the soul, it is both natural and reasonable

for every thoughtful man to dread his dissolution. Secular history and mere philosophy can show us no worthier or manlier encounter with death than we see in the case of Socrates. But we have seen both old and young, and men and women die more nobly. The gentle maiden among her flowers, and fairer than the fairest among them, passes quietly from the bloom of health to the paleness of death, and fears no evil. The feeble man, whose head is as white as the blossoms of the almond tree, and whose pupils look darkly out of the windows of the soul, showing not the sparkle and flash of youthful years—this venerable form walks down upon the shore of time, and fears not the boundless ocean of eternity before him. It is not merely the strong soldier in the strife of battle; it is also the tender mother in the silent chamber, with her little and lovely children around her, that the Bible raises above the fear of death. Well do I remember such a scene; and while I stood by her bedside and saw her body languish, and her husband and children weep a rain of tears because the hour of their bereavement had almost come, her spirit seemed to soar and shine, and I said to myself again and again: "The King's daughter is all-glorious within." God's word had made even the prospect of death greatly joyful to that beautiful soul.

O, precious Bible! that gives to young and old, high and low, rich and poor, all the glory and blessedness of the children of God.

And it is fit to do this for every soul under the

whole heavens. The dwellers on the mountains and in the vales, on the broad prairies, in the crowded city, all over the wide continents, and on the little islands of the ocean—on every rocky fastness and in every restless ship—all, *all* should enjoy the blessings which the Bible gives. All should derive strength, wisdom, joy, salvation from its most precious and powerful knowledge. This they will do in the days to come; “for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

III.

The Attractions and Uses of History.

"All the changes that are brought to pass in the world from age to age, are ordered in infinite wisdom in one respect or other to prepare the way for that glorious issue of things that shall be when truth and righteousness shall finally prevail."—JONATHAN EDWARDS.

THE associations of time and place are often stronger than the human will, and the faculty by which we invariably connect certain ideas with related objects must ever make the memorials of history more or less attractive to every intelligent and thoughtful mind. For it is in this way that the scenes and the events of the past are ever more able to move the heart.

When Lafayette had made his last voyage across the ocean from his home in France to the banks of the Potomac and the mansion of Mount Vernon, he went to the tomb of Washington, and there received from Washington's adopted son that simple ring which used to adorn the finger of the Father of his Country. Then the memories of the past proved too powerful for the nerve of one who had all unconsciously poured forth his blood at Brandywine, till an aid pointed out the wound; who had commanded an assault with the

bayonet at Yorktown ; whose courage and coolness had quelled the ferocious mob at Versailles, and saved the lives of the king and queen ; and whose rare endowments and lofty character had enabled him to lead a revolution ; to organize, employ and then resign a military command of three and a half millions of men, and to maintain " the same tone, the same air, the same open confidence amid the ruins of the Bastile, in the Champ de Mars, under the despotism of Bonaparte, and in the dungeons of Olmütz." The association of his early manhood overpowered his utterance at the grave of Washington ; and when Colonel Custis threw about his neck the ribbon which sustained that memorial ring, he had no words to speak the deep emotions of his soul. Flowing tears were his only acknowledgment of the precious souvenir.

Late in life Archibald Alexander revisited the scenes of his youth—amid those beautiful aspects of Nature which were a joy of his ripest years—to commemorate the virtues of his early friends and teachers whose offspring thronged to hear the words of his silvery speech. But in the midst of his discourse he faltered, grew pale, ceased to speak, and sank back in his seat. It was not till loving hands had carried him into the shade of the church, and placed his seat in the open air amid the graves of the men whose virtues he rehearsed, that he could finish his grateful tribute to their worth.

The cathedral of Limerick is said to contain a peal of bells once brought from a convent in Italy. A

wealthy artist, who had made his home near the convent cliff, had caused them to be cast with great labor and skill; and for many years he enjoyed sometimes their merry and sometimes their solemn music. But political revolutions came. The monks were driven from their monastery, the artist from his home. The bells found new owners; and their once happy neighbor fled an exile to other lands. His wanderings at length brought him to Ireland. While a light bateau bore him along, up the broad stream of the Shannon, he suddenly heard a peal of bells. It was the long lost joy of his former home. The comfort and delight of prosperous and peaceful years were in their well-remembered tones. He crossed his arms upon his breast, reclined upon the boat, and gazed and listened. When the bells had ceased to peal and the rowers looked around, they saw his face still towards the cathedral, but the veil of death had fallen upon his eyes. The associations of the past had caused a flood of emotion, overwhelmed the soul, and swept away the very channel of life.

Who has not felt, in some degree, this power of association? Who does not know that the Past ever holds a regal sceptre over the Present?

“The child is father of the man.”

The brook on whose verdant bank or frozen surface he sported, and in whose soft, flowing waters he bathed—the woods through which he wandered and marked a thousand aspects of Nature, when all the world was

new to him, and the simplest forms of beauty, and the lowliest creature of God could charm his eye—the books of poetic fancy which moved the tenderness of his heart and gave wider scope to his childish thought—the stories of Joseph and David, Haman and Sinon, Gulliver and Sinbad, Crusoe and Rinaldo—the volumes of higher studies and the hallowed scenes of prayer—all these maintain their spell, and often touch one's inmost soul with the very wand of the Past. And the Past is the peculiar domain of History.

Doubtless we may here and there find one whose organic and vital structure is so rootless—whose intellectual and moral growth is so independent of former years—that he esteems the study of History the labor of Sisyphus—endless in duration, fruitless in result. But let a proper method and a right spirit direct this study, and it will tend to form a sound judgment and an orderly and happy mind. It is fit to make one truly conservative and wisely progressive. This advantage springs from the very nature of History, which is a living organism, the regular development of God's providence of the world, or the use which He makes of His terrestrial creation, in the external and internal progress of the human race. It is not the doings and the deeds of man alone. It is also, in part, the product of divine will and efficiency. This gives us, in one word, the true source and the best assurance of human progress. But it does not certify and vindicate the truth and wholesomeness of every manifestation in the course of this progress; for the judicious observation

of Neander, on the course of Christianity, is equally applicable to the providential element in the whole progress of our race: "It may become blended for a while with the impure elements attracted by its influence, and in its manifestation assume a shape which wholly resembles them." There are eddies which show the reality and the direction of the main current. There are also wrecks, which its reflux waves, or its violent floods, sometimes strand here and there along its uncertain and variable shores. The schoolmen were careful not to confound the accidents with the subject of the sacramental elements; and we must also distinguish between the incidental manifestations and the genuine substance of History.

No man should overlook and disregard the manifold events of his own day. But we grow restless with a feverish excitement whenever we give an exclusive attention to the transactions in which we take an active part. The experience of a single age is much less comprehensive, sober and valuable than the experience of the whole race. The whole course of active youth and vigorous manhood must give us more knowledge and wisdom than old age can derive from the transient events of a year. The temporary and partial excitements and revulsions of every age of the world cannot avert the general and onward course of the race. Development is the law of History. And if the past had no other claim to our attention, we should study it for the reason which made it so attractive to the Roman historian whose "narrative is be-

yond description vivid and graceful." For it is of Livy that Macaulay says : "He contemplated the past with interest and delight, not because it furnished a contrast to the present, but because it had led to the present." This is its office, action and result from age to age ; for the Spirit which first breathed into our race the breath of life is still the life of its history. Hence we must not deem the course of our race to be hostile to our moral nature, or contrary to the plan which God is consciously and manifestly unfolding in the world, or independent of the fact that He is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. For, in the true and comprehensive view of History, we see God, its source ; man, its subject ; Christ, its centre ; and redemption, its end and aim.

It confers no unimportant advantage in holding these great objects constantly before the mind. The study of history, in this point of view, tends to attach us to all the good which the past has evolved, and to make us eager only for the good which the future will reveal.

The poet, who made the earlier social life of his nation almost live again upon his vivid page, intimates that

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

But no light shines from the past to illumine the future for him who knows not what events have already run their course. It is only the man who knows how the good has hitherto come from the action of the free human will in its dependence upon the con-

trolling providence of God; that is in the highest degree fit to hold fast the good already gained, to forecast the good which the future will disclose, and most wisely and successfully to labor for its attainment. He only can skilfully and intelligently investigate the facts; ascertain their principles and laws; comprehend their manifold relations and determine what ought to be done, and what can be done, to repress the evil and to foster the good in the future. It is only the man who has this vantage ground that can be the true conservative and the wise reformer.

There is in human affairs a conservatism whose symbol preserves in amber the forms of dead flies, and in the rocky strata of the earth the skeletons of creatures whose period of existence is bound up in geologic ages. It is a fossiliferous conservatism—the product of petrification. It is not a vigorous tree, whose form and substance the laws and functions of vegetable life continually maintain, holding fast whatever fit for its purpose has been acquired in previous stages of growth, and still gathering new accretions in each revolving year. It is a dead tree, which retains its outward form indeed, but changes its essential nature and turns into stone. It is the superannuated garb which various papal devotees so pharisaically display, and which shows, not that the Christian religion has reached its highest development, but that the perfection of costume had fully come in the ages of superstition when the garb was first worn or made the distinctive badge of an order.

This stony conservatism is quite as reprehensible as the most subterranean radicalism. The proper study of history would cause both to be discarded. It imparts assurance to every intelligent mind that great and beneficent changes are in the purposes and plans of Providence, to be accomplished through the operations of many powerful agencies—that progress, without opposition, might be a simple melody of nature, but that progress by antagonism, is the grand harmony of creation, in which the brief discords give occasion for higher evolutions and combinations, and make the triumphant result more effective and sublime.

Let the true historic spirit take possession of a man and he will perceive that a vital, organic union binds together all the parts of the progress of our race. He will see that “neither philosophy, nor government, nor political institutions, nor religious knowledge can remain much behind, or go much in advance of the totality of contemporary intelligence.” He will see, for instance, that the great religious movement of Europe in the sixteenth century did not spring from the marriage of a monk and a nun. Preparations for it had been going forward among the nations, and especially among the northern nations of Europe, full a hundred years before Luther made his appearance upon the historic stage. These preparations appear all the more conspicuous after the revival of learning in western and central Europe, consequent upon the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the invention of the art of printing about the same time—quite half a century before Luther made any figure in history.

So, in later times, the great Southern Rebellion of America had been long in preparation through false pretensions of State sovereignty, preposterous expositions of the divinity of negro slavery, and the necessity of domestic despotism for the foundation of civil freedom and republican institutions; unhistorical statements of the relations, intentions, scope and power of the constitution of the supreme government; fallacious views of the connection between the exports of a country and its substantial prosperity; plausible deceptions concerning the relations of labor and capital; and a thousand influences springing from these and other causes, to mold and shape the character of millions of people, whose leaders had been trained to rule, prized the possession of power and the exercise of authority, and would rather commit the highest crimes of treason and rebellion than yield the position of supremacy in the government of the nation; for Cæsar has many a follower who would sooner be the first man of an Alpine hamlet than the second man of Rome.

Through the operation of whatever causes and forces, the great changes of history usually advance step by step. Thus one may go a great way, and history is too grave and august to leap and bound.

. Any one who comprehends this gradual course of manifold and mainly benign events, will put forth his own activity in the line of those beneficent movements which are already visible or conspicuous in history. For he knows that the existing state of society can no

more be thoroughly changed in a day than the existing individuals of the human species can forthwith give place to members of another race, or to men of an unborn generation. He knows that God works deliberately, as well in the human history as in ante-human geologic formations ; and hence he trains himself to make haste slowly.

On the other hand, the fact of gradual improvement in the past makes the well-taught student of history thoroughly confident that the operation of the same causes will accomplish benign results in the future. Hence, step by step in the right direction, he proceeds on his way, and employs those forces which are already known to be effective in promoting human welfare, and also every new force which the very progress of the race may disclose as mighty through God to pull down the strongholds of evil.

The proper study of history, therefore, confers this great advantage, namely : the union of devotion to the truth with liberality of spirit towards all new and false opinions.

The knowledge of history enlarges the intellectual and moral view. It is more and better than foreign travel ; for a thousand generations present a broader field than a score of continents. It offers to our contemplation creation's grandest objects, and man is elevated through the sublimity of the objects of his contemplation, according to the philosophic utterance of the apostle Paul : " We all, with open face be-

holding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

Whoever, in the true historic method and spirit, gives candid and intelligent attention to the great questions of mental, moral, political and theological science—the great questions which the best minds of the world now meditate, as they have been wont to do from age to age, will not lightly esteem the victories won and the results gained already on these fields of intellectual conflict. The battles hitherto fought for all the main positions now commonly held on these subjects, and the frequent overthrow and rout of the objections brought forward in successive ages against them, are among the greatest achievements of our race. They permit no one acquainted with their history to deem them worthless or untenable. They have been deliberately chosen, fiercely assaulted, successfully defended, thoroughly fortified on every side against every point of approach and attack, and rendered more impregnable than all engineering skill, positive science and military art can make any material fortification. They are the products of the consummate wisdom and ceaseless activity of the most pious, vigorous and laborious minds of many generations. They verify the aphorism of that great master of reason and eloquence, who said: "The individual is weak, but the race is strong." It is the same sentiment which America's chief historian has robed in these words: "The many are wiser than the few; the race than the individual." Yes; stronger, wiser, grander.

I stood in the presence of Niagara ; and while that indescribable vision of beauty and sublimity fixed my gaze and moved my soul with solemn awe and holy rapture, my thoughts flew on fancy's wings over the widespread regions whence come the myriad streams that form that mighty flood. Many a one, while pursuing its lonely way amid rocky heights, over pebbly beds, or amid fertile fields of golden grain, has no more force than the rising column of feathery spray on which the all-beholding sun paints the glorious bow of peace above the rage and tumult of the cataract ; but the combined result of their ceaseless flow is the stupendous power of Niagara. Equally irresistible is the current which all the sources of history pour along the banks of time ; and whether leaping and dashing against obstructions that resist its course, like the rapids ; or plunging, like the fall itself, over some mountain wall ; or, like the river below the cataract, hastening silently onward through wide or narrow channels, the course of the world's history is the noblest object of human thought beneath the skies. Hence the great truths which it has brought to us are devoutly cherished by all who know their origin, their conflicts and their worth. And that employment of the mind which surveys the condition, courses and destiny of our race, grapples the truth to our hearts with hooks of steel, and creates a holy enthusiasm for its preservation.

It is equally adapted to foster a liberal spirit towards new, erroneous and individual opinions. It

prevents bigotry, and promotes generosity and charity in various ways.

In the first place, it enlarges and elevates the mind whose powers are employed in its survey. It makes the spirit of the age, which we breathe in our childhood, give place to the spirit of the ages which should rule our riper years. It deracinates the prejudices of nationality and implants the knowledge and love of humanity. It also expands the field of observation, and thus affords the means of combining in a higher unity what might otherwise seem to oppose the positions of thoroughly established truth.

Again, it shows how rapidly and often erroneous and unsubstantial opinions, either new or thought to be so, come forth and glitter for a season in a kind of twilight like the fire-fly, and then disappear, to return again after a series of years, like those volatile comets whose periodic movements may be predicted, but whose exact orbit is unknown. History soon makes it sure to every faithful inquirer that most of the novelties in political, moral, religious, and even social science which every age and many an ambitious reformer bring to the public with great pretensions and great expectations, are as evanescent and unproductive in the cosmos of truth as these lightest gaseous members of the solar system are in the universe of nature. In the darkness of ignorance they appear like the comets blazing away in the night, imposing and important. But they come and go with equal rapidity, and intelligent observers never mistake their character. Any

man who knows that he holds on the most important subject substantially the same opinions which the great body of thinking, investigating, philosophic minds have held for a thousand years, can well afford to show a liberal, generous spirit toward those erratic and volatile minds, who often appear as the froth and foam upon the stream of history, and who are wont to believe themselves the cause of that rapid current, to whose chafing against obstructions they owe both their origin and their temporary existence. The mighty river need not be eager and hasty to overwhelm them, nor angry at their presumption. They will soon disappear in the natural progress of the race, as thousands of airy bubbles of a similar kind have vanished before them.

All alone—with no human being within the reach of my voice—with no living creature within the sphere of my vision—I stood on a narrow ledge where others had stood before me, but where no man can ever stand again, beneath the mightiest flood of the mightiest cataract of earth. At my back and under my feet was the crumbling shale, soon after swept away into the vast abyss; impending above me, far as the eye could pierce through the whirling spray, was the rapidly falling rock; before me was the rushing, whelming, vast and many-colored flood; pressing into my lungs, ever and anon with suffocating force, was the imprisoned air, never at rest, always contracting or expanding so rapidly and violently between the ever-moving wall of water and the never-moving wall of rock, as to make

breathing almost impossible ; filling my ears and shaking my whole frame was the "great voice of many waters," most impressive symbol of the word of God ; all over me the heavy rain of the descending deluge ; and all around me the deep gloom of that awful underworld. Then and there I felt my own littleness ; yet, not even in those solemn circumstances, came there to me so vivid and overmastering a conception of the comparative insignificance of one man, as the contemplation of the history of our race, in its sublime and ceaseless progress, gives to the susceptible student of its course.

When, therefore, he beholds the vain, fruitless and unsubstantial opinions of erratic minds rising as the mist of the cataract, and hurrying away on the wings of the wind to join other clouds of vapor, or to disappear forever, while the great body of truth moves forward with majestic sweep on its mighty march through the ages, like the continuous flow of the river, he may well cherish a liberal spirit towards those unfortunate persons who are fascinated with the iris-hues which they discern amid the misty and ever-variable forms of error—who are more strongly drawn to an idea which has the semblance of novelty than to one which has the substance of truth.

We all have more or less interest in whatever concerns our own opinions, or personal welfare, however remote it may lie from present prospects, and however great the intervals of time which seem to separate it from current events. And whatever appeals to the

higher and better parts of our nature, has the greater power to attract a noble, pure and candid mind. The man, whether warrior or statesman, who saves us from national degradation and ruin, secures loftier homage than the inventive genius who facilitates the intercourse of the world and confers upon us all the wealth of commerce ; for patriotism is a nobler sentiment than the love of riches.

The nature of the case, therefore, makes it plain, that history is most attractive when we regard and study it in that light, or from that point of view, which brings it into the closest relation to our moral and spiritual powers. The Incarnation of the Son of God unites the subject and the centre of history. It brings the source and the centre of all human progress into one divine Person ; and, according to Vinet's happy thought, puts into the mouth of God the saying : "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign from me." In this union of God and man all have an interest both personal and profound—momentous and eternal. It appeals to all that is nearest divine within us, and it only can make us godlike. It is history's great and only power to recover, lift up, exalt and bless both the individual and the race. To support this statement there are among men now on the stage of life few names of more weight than Bancroft's ; and he says : "For the regeneration of the world it was requisite that the Divine Being should enter into the abodes and hearts of men, and dwell there ; that an idea of Him should arise, which should include all truth respecting

His essence ; that He should be known not only as an abstract and absolute cause, but as a perfect Being, from whose perfect nature the universe is an effluence ; not as a distant Providence of infinite power, and uncertain and inactive will, but as God present in the flesh ; not as an absolute Lawgiver, holding the material world, and all moral and intelligent existence, in the chains of necessity, but as a creative spirit, indwelling in man, his fellow-worker and guide.

“ When the Divine Being was thus presented to the soul, He touched at once man’s aspirations, affections and intelligence. . . . The consciousness of an incarnate God carried peace into the bosom of humanity. That faith emancipated the slave, redeemed the captive, elevated the low, lifted up the oppressed, consoled the wretched, inspired alike the heroes of thought and the countless masses. . . . And the idea of God with us dwelt and dwells in every system of thought that can pretend to vitality ; in every oppressed nation whose struggles to be free have the promise of success ; in every soul that sighs for redemption.”*

It is, therefore, with reference to redemption that history is most attractive. But in this point of view, the gradual unfolding and realization of the plan of redemption, no other field of research is so attractive.

The incarnation is the centre of this plan. It is the

* Address before New York Historical Society.

point in human progress where all the lines of antecedent movements converge, and whence all the lines of subsequent movements spring and radiate. It is the manifest epoch of that higher development of our race whose fruits become greater and richer on wider and wider fields of Christendom from age to age. Then theism revived with a more vigorous life. Then religion robed in light and full of power, as "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet," received a divine commission to go from land to land, and overcome and demolish all the venerable and massive systems of idolatry throughout the world. And from that hour

"The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo, from his shrine,
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving."

A long preparation had prepared the way for the great event. Among the chosen people, where Immanuel became manifest in the flesh, this preparation ran through a period of two thousand years. The call of Abraham; the promise that one of his descendants should bless all the families of the earth; the removal of the patriarchs to Egypt; the bondage; the exodus; the miraculous sojourn in the wilderness; the reception of the law; the organization of the commonwealth; the institution of the sacred rites; the possession of the promised land; the military, judi-

cial, priestly and prophetic spirit of the people ; the culmination of their system under the regal sway of the noblest and wisest kings ; the decline of their virtue ; their captivity ; the consequent extermination of their idolatry ; the return to their own land ; the collection and arrangement of their holy books ; the display of their courage under the Asmonean princes ; their subjection to Rome ; their dispersion through many lands, and the establishment of their synagogues in all parts of the Roman Empire—all their history forms a preparation for two thousand years to complete “the fulness of time” for God to become manifest in the flesh. It is a grand, extensive and thorough accomplishment of a divine plan—a plan which includes the religious rites and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the temple, pointing perpetually to the true sacrifice for sin, once for all, at Calvary, to redeem mankind. The Pharisees’ exclusiveness, austerity, conscientiousness and zeal, which made religion the all-important matter, with grievous burdens upon men’s shoulders and weariness of their souls ; the Sadducees’ self-righteousness and devotion to civil society and temporary interests, with no adequate supplies for man’s moral and spiritual wants ; the Essenes’ mysticism and peacefulness ; their industry and communism without bloody sacrifices and offerings—all these were a preparation for Him who came to do away the burdensome service, the brute victims, the worldly spirit, through His own real sacrifice, and to unite all His followers in one family, filling them with the controlling power of love

to God and men. Not less important than the other sects of the chosen people were the Hellenists of the dispersion—a million in Alexandria; hundreds of thousands in Rome; Asia and Pontus, Galatia and Bithynia populous with them; and all parts of the empire containing their synagogues. They had taught their holy books to speak with the tongue of Greece; they had mastered heathen philosophy; they had won multitudes to the faith of Theism; they had made their proselytes as fit to convey through the world the ideas of the Incarnate One as the Romans had made their military roads fit for the journeys of the holy apostles. Indeed, the faith of one God was already pervading the minds of all thoughtful and philosophic heathen.

And both Greeks and Romans had dim notions of the possibility of the incarnation of the Deity to deliver the world from the bondage of evil. The testimony of Socrates to the necessity of this intervention seems to be almost a prophetic utterance. Their consciousness of moral obligation; their insight into the real meaning of sacrifices; their faith in the substitution of sufferings, the innocent for the guilty; their hope of the expiation of sin in this way—all these ideas, essential to the life of humanity, had gradually become the possession of the Greek and Roman mind.

Moreover, Greece had learned to prize the worth of man as such, and to esteem the advantages of civil freedom. Indeed, man had come to be the religion of Greece. I do not see that even Swedenborg has

gone in this direction one step beyond them. The images of their gods are the fit embodiment of their religion. It is the worship of beauty in human forms. Their aim was to reconcile man and nature, and to live in the enjoyment of nature to the greatest extent of human power. They saw the worth of social and civil virtues, but they had no esteem, nor even knowledge of supreme love to God. They expected a future life which could be little more than a slight transformation of the relations and activities of this world. Their chief good was social and civil virtue, and that culture of taste and arts which Christianity has shown a readiness to approve and adopt, and a power to refine, elevate and sanctify.

The Roman never wore the youthful graces and sunny beauty of the Grecian religion. We see here the courage, genius and stern rule of the warrior. To conquer the world was the aim of the empire, and this idea gave their character to the gods. Everywhere else virtue is only an element of religion. But in the age and city of the Cæsars, religion was no more than a part of virtue. The State made, ruled and claimed it. Hence the native gods and customary worship of other nations, as soon as they were subject to Rome, could be transferred to the capital of the world, though some citizens, like Juvenal, could not bear to see the home of Romulus become a Grecian city, and the Orontes flow through the Tiber. Pride in the State was the highest aspiration ; courage and devotion to it the highest virtue, and conquest for it the highest

honor. Man was not religion as in Greece, but the State was both the source and end of it. "Society," it has been said, "was known to be a divine existence from which each drew great impulses, and to which all owed sacred reverence. The national consciousness was felt to be the true identity of the citizen, into whose high, eternal force individual passion was taught to burn. Thus legislation was their instinct; government, justice and equity their familiar reason."*

But this sublime devotion of the individual to the State was not immortal. Not every Roman was a Regulus. In due season the time came for bold scepticism on the one hand, and the most hideous superstition on the other. And as soon as the fulness of time had come for the brightness of the Father's glory to shine forth in the person of His Son, the old Roman religion and virtue were nearly ready to be shaken, and to vanish away; and it is only in a very general sense that Gibbon speaks truth in saying: "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful." The people, for the most part, had come to despair of all progress, though the priests sought a livelihood, and the emperors a support from the religion of the State. But its day had almost come. Neither Pontifex nor Cæsar could save it; and it could only partially revive in a later age under the dominion of the Pope. It had accom-

* Horace Binney Wallace.

plished all the good it could accomplish, and so, in the proper moment, it gave place to a religion whose scope is wider than the Roman empire, and whose Author and Finisher is more august than the highest object of Roman worship. But the Roman religion did most assuredly live long enough to set forth the idea of a religion sufficiently comprehensive to fill a kingdom embracing the whole race, and thus to prepare the way for Him in whom there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but one brotherhood of man, one family of God.

The conquests of the Roman soldier, and the comprehensiveness of the Roman religion were not the only agents of preparation in the heathen world for the divine incarnation. Magi in the East, and philosophers in the West were active to prepare the way for the Lord. The wise men who came, divinely led, with the richest offerings to the Babe of Bethlehem, were no more the ministers of God than were the great thinkers who walked and taught centuries before in the schools and markets of Athens and Alexandria. Platonism desired not a little of such spiritual and divine truth as the Word made flesh most benignly revealed. And the philosophy of the Stoics and the Epicureans demanded a religion fit for the moral and social nature of man. But though philosophy made the demand, it had no power to give a religion essential to human progress. The impulsive power of the incarnation, which has carried the progressive part of the race such vast stages in advance, was not in the

possession of philosophy. The very immensity of this advance renders it difficult for us to measure the distance which separates heathenism of the least offensive type from our very imperfect realization of Christianity. It would not be possible, in the language of Christendom, to delineate some of the more common features of heathenism in the best days of Greece and Rome. But the first part of Paul's Epistle to the Roman Christians gives us some intimation of the real and hideously immoral character of the pagan world.

The Desire of all nations did not come too soon. Pantheism in the East, and Polytheism in the West had failed. The ancient Theism of the Hebrew people needed a divine reconstruction, and the inspiration of a new mode of intercourse with the Deity. The one great want of the world was the incarnation of God. The want was met in the manifestation of God in the flesh, and the regeneration of the world dates from that hour. What life has it given to every part of Christendom, and how every other human interest does obeisance in the presence of this divine redemption! Here centre and spring all the great historic movements of the race, and all the hopes of eternal life for the individual.

The work of redemption, therefore, through the incarnation of the Son of God, in its gradual application or realization in the progress of the race, and its personal apprehension and regenerative experience in the consciousness of the individual, is the chief source of attraction in history. For this reason it is impos-

sible that history should lose its uses and attractions ; for the realization of man's redemption through the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour advances ever more. China and Japan even now throw wide open their doors to receive the Gospel ; Russia emancipates her serfs, and extends the blessings of orderly government and European civilization across Siberia and throughout the whole course of the Amoor to the utmost limits of Asia ; the Queen of Great Britain takes her vast Indian Empire under the direct care and control of the realm, and appoints an earnest evangelical Christian to the office of Governor-General ; Australia develops her resources and augments her population with wonderful rapidity ; America establishes telegraphic intercourse and regular lines of steam communication between her Pacific shores and the Asiatic continent ; pushes forward a railroad from ocean to ocean across the Rocky Mountains ; establishes the supremacy of the national government in every part of her territory by a gigantic war to suppress the great rebellion ; gives liberty from domestic servitude, and the great boon of an open Bible to four millions of her population ; and stamps on every coin from her various mints this welcome legend—"In God we trust ;" Italy gives free course to the Word of God from the highest Alps to the remotest angle of Sicily ; Africa discloses the secrets of her heart to the eyes of Christian exploration and scientific discovery, and shows her fitness to foster upon her luxuriant bosom the arts and activities of high civilization.

And these current events which carry forward the work of redemption are just the simple and sublime unfoldings of principles, whose energy we may trace as the life and force of the past, and whose mature fruits will crown with greater glory the better ages of the future. It is therefore certain, that so long as man shall need the guidance of truth, the redemption of Immanuel and the hope of immortality, the field of history cannot lose its uses and attractions.

IV.

Christianity in Contrast with False Religions.

"This divine sun shines much more brightly than all the suns in the firmament ever shone; and in its light all the man's ways, and works and doings are so changed into its image that he feels nothing to be so true as God, with a certainty that is rooted in the very midst of his being."—JOHN TAULER.

THE eye which surveys the field of history cannot fail to observe that religion has built the most durable, imposing and venerable structures on the face of the earth. Sacred architecture has adorned the plains of China with innumerable pagodas; shaped the mountains of India into symbols of the native deities; built the cities of the dead and the sepulchral pyramids in Egypt; crowned the heights of Syria with hypæthral temples; constructed the vast palaces of Nineveh and Babylon; hewn out the massive stones and carved the beautiful arches of Baalbek; displayed the glories of the highest Grecian art on the Acropolis of Athens; set forth the mighty and imperial rule of the Roman gods in the Capitol and the Pantheon; brought together the rocky giants of Stonehenge; marked its course step by step from mound to mound through the valley of the Father of Waters;

left its solemn memorials at Palenque and Cuzco ; laid the immovable foundations of the Hebrew temple ; and reared ten thousand spires on magnificent cathedrals and lowly chapels in every part of Christendom. All these unite their various tones, and proclaim in sublime harmony the religious nature of man. They declare that divine worship is the impulse of his heart, and the law of his conscience. This is the testimony of every temple, pagoda, mosque and idol-fane from the rising to the setting sun.

“ Rather than abandon the thought that some Being above nature is interested in them, mankind will assume that the heavenly bodies have some mysterious communication with the earth ; that the sun goes round the whole globe just to see their actions ; that there are planets presiding over our birth, and determining our life and death—or they will people the woods and the darkness of night with spirits, and reckon the breezes their whispers of communication regarding us, and the storms the expression of their indignation against those who have offended them.”* This craving of the human soul for supernatural influences is strong enough to impel multitudes, who cannot forego the consciousness of spiritual communion, to cherish the shallowest superstition, and the deceitful belief that their own dreamy imaginings are communications from the ghosts of their deceased kindred.

But reason and revelation, ever harmonious, alike testify that as a man “ thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

* McCosh ; *Divine Government*, Book 1, Chap. 1, Sec. 2.

His thoughts and his belief determine his character and the consequences of his faith are most momentous. On no other subject is it so important to have right views as in respect to the Deity ; for among all the objects of thought which affect man's character, there is no other so influential. And if we turn away our eyes from the Bible, and from God manifest in the flesh, the true God and eternal Life, our ideas of the Deity will be mainly the reflection of our own natural constitution—our own passions. It is said that a Pantheistic professor of the Berlin University once remarked to his pupils : " In this lecture I have now shown you how God made man. In my next I will show you how man makes God." And, according to Vinet, " man has never failed to make a God of his own image, and his various religions have never surpassed himself ; for, if by these he imposes on himself acts and privations which he would not otherwise impose, those toils which are of his own choice do not raise him above himself. Hence those religions do not change the principles of his inner life." This is the case under all natural and false religions, which are very largely the dread and worship of malignant powers. But the religion of the Bible requires the worship of no ideal abstractions, no personification of nature, no reflection of our own passions. We have a supernatural revelation disclosing the true God, who is not the projection of our own imperfect image, but a divine Being, after whose faultless image of heavenly perfection we may shape our own character, and thus

improve and fashion it unto the likeness of the Holy One. And this is, indeed, the very aim of Christianity, an aim which it evermore reaches in a greater or less degree.

It is true that the political and civil institutions, and the moral and intellectual culture of any people will somewhat affect their religion; but all history shows that every vigorous religion rather moulds a nation's institutions and culture than yields to them. In our own country, for instance, every one who is not wilfully blind may plainly see that our republican institutions and our mental culture are the products of the religion of our fathers rather than the reverse. A profound German historian, who is accustomed to investigate the causes of political events—to trace the developments and ascertain the fruits of principles—has pointed out the great Theologian and Reformer of Geneva as the real author of the American Revolution; and we know it was the stern Scotch reformer who said: "Set up the school by the kirk." Thus, for three centuries Scotland has been proverbially intelligent.

But Christianity is not content with any degree of secular and external improvement. It is in contrast with all false religions in making its appeal to the conscience, and taking effect first upon the heart and then upon life. In this peculiarity it is singularly and immensely superior to every system of morality or religion which the wisdom of men has ever devised. Confucius and Socrates sought to purify the stream

while they left the corrupt and corrupting fountain uncleansed, untouched. It was their aim to make the branch bring forth good fruit while the bitter root retained its naturally evil character. They were not intellectually feeble in their efforts. They display great breadth and compass of mind. Their philosophy sweeps over a wide space, and their mental acumen penetrates deeply into the more difficult subjects of the most subtle human thought. They pursued their earthly course, employed their highest mental power, submitted to the fate of mortals, and gave their bodies to the dust thousands of years ago, but the products of their genius still live ; and in every student of the Grecian philosophy, and in every devotee of the religious system of the millions of China, we may see this very hour the durable results of the life-long labors of these great religious teachers. But their doctrines do not even seek to change the heart. They have no tendency nor effect to renovate the inner man. The case is the same with *every* system of false religion—Mohammedism. Boodhism. Brahmanism, and every other form of Paganism. So it is with those systems of mere rationalism which the intense intellectual activity of modern times never ceases to produce in rapid succession and with ever-changing features. On this vital point the recent schemes seem to be no better than the ancient systems of religion. It is far otherwise with Christianity. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." It lays a restraining hand on every unholy desire. It makes its appeal to

the conscience, moves the heart and regulates the outward conduct and every action of the daily life, through the renovation of the inner man. Heathen philosophers and moralists have so utterly failed to discover a remedy for the secret sins of the soul, that we wonder how the greatest Roman satirist came to express and seem to apprehend the truth that a secret purpose of wickedness is the very essence of the criminal deed.* To aim at the heart is so peculiar to Christianity, so unlike the current thought of heathenism, that two lines only, from the pen of Juvenal, suggest the inquiry whether he had not heard the preaching of the apostle Paul. Were this known to be the fact, it would disclose the origin of the satirist's enlightened sentiment. For there is no feature of Christianity more conspicuous than its prohibition of the most secret evil thought and sinful desire. This trait shows its immeasurable superiority to every other system of religion ; and this peculiarity is one of its distinctive features.

He who knew what was in man, and who spake as man never spake, has taught us to live at all times as in the sight of God, and in all our ways to bear in mind that in the final reckoning before Heaven's great assize, we must give an account for all the secret desires, thoughts and purposes of the soul. Even this profound utterance does not reach the depth of His teaching. He boldly proclaims that every man, in his natural state, must be born from above—that the whole bent

* Juvenal. Satire xij. 209, 210.

and tendency of his moral powers must be radically changed—that he must become regenerate, a new creature in Christ Jesus—in order to secure the unchangeable favor of God and eternal felicity in heaven. It is an essential point in Christianity that we are not to expect peace of conscience and peace with God through any works of righteousness within our own performance or power. No pilgrimages, tortures, penances, offerings, immolations or deeds of charity will suffice to annul the sins of thought, word or action. On the contrary, faith must unite the soul to the divine Saviour of man in order to salvation. Here the Gospel reaches the heart. This was Luther's profound experience. Through weary years, in the convent of Erfurt, he felt, beyond expression, the sorrowful torments of an accusing conscience, all the while making vigorous though futile efforts to acquire a righteousness that would save him. "But when," he says, "I began to learn that the righteousness which is acceptable to God is revealed without the deeds of the law—from that very time how my feelings changed! And I said to myself, if we are made righteous by faith—if the righteousness which availeth before God is saving to all who believe therein, then such declarations ought not to alarm the poor sinner and his timid conscience, but rather be to them a consolation." "As soon as you receive the knowledge of Christ with sure faith, all anger, fear and trembling vanish in the twinkling of an eye, and nothing but pure compassion is seen in God! Such knowledge quickeneth the heart and

maketh it joyful and assured that God is not angry with us, but tenderly loveth us." Thus the knowledge that Christianity first moves the heart and then the life, set Luther free from the yoke of bondage, and, by the grace of God, made him a joyful, active and effective Christian. The same effect was wrought in that poor Hindu who was making a pilgrimage of a thousand miles, walking in shoes whose soles were transpierced with sharp spikes, to expiate his sin. But when he came to the place where Swartz was preaching, and heard the Christian missionary say, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"—"Oh, that is what I want!" he exclaimed. It was what no religion but Christianity could offer, but this the Gospel holds forth to every man who yields his heart to God in Christ Jesus. It is here in perfect contrast with all false religions.

So it is in its power to renovate the spirit and reform the conduct of every one of its possessors. What can the highest types of heathen religion accomplish for this end? They reached their culmination thousands of years ago. They displayed their greatest power in Greece and Rome. They gave animation, energy and prowess to the people. They fostered the love of beauty and developed a taste for the finest arts. Magnificent sculptures, poems, pictures are their fruits. In one country, they inspired the virtues of patriotism and high devotion to civil freedom. In the other, they cherished the lust of conquest and of empire. They stimulated some of the noblest principles of our na-

ture to disastrous excess. But they did not change the moral character of the people. To renovate the inner man of the heart was not within their power. The higher and better classes of citizens were largely addicted to the practice of vices which Christian language cannot describe. And what words can paint the character and conduct of the promiscuous mass of the people?

There is another religion which has bravely contested a wide field with Christianity through a period of a thousand years ; and we are drawn with a strong attraction to the fanaticism of Mahomet. It inculcates the worship of one God, but it changes not the moral character of its devotees. It does not regenerate the nature of the Moslem. He repeats his prayers with the utmost precision, and rises from them to perpetrate some monstrous crime without a thought of the least inconsistency between his religion and his sanguinary conduct.

There are more venerable systems of religion than Islamism in the farther East ; but throughout their existence for a score of centuries they have shown no ability to save their most enthusiastic devotees from moral debasement and corruption.

Christianity, on the other hand, often shows its power to control every faculty of the mind, and to purify every affection of the heart. It makes the soul yield the fruits of holiness even to everlasting life. It changes the natural disposition of man's moral powers. It enlists him in a successful struggle, though

it be often an obstinate warfare, against every sinful tendency or habit. Wherever it appears in its purity it makes man faithful, just, benevolent, true and good. It makes woman chaste, gentle, kindly and devout. It makes society peaceable and prosperous. It makes civilization progressive and salutary. It gains these advantages according to its own method of moving first the heart of the individual and then his life in the outer world. In this way it advances the community, the state, the nation. It cures the malady of sin in the human heart and in human society in the same way that the principle of life, in man's physical frame, cures a dangerous wound. It expels death and decay, and fills the place with vitality and growth. It shows its divine energy in every class of society and every nation of Christendom.

If you turn your eye to some island of the Pacific, or some inland town of Africa, where Christian men have just made their first appearance, you behold society in one of its extremes—a wretched, repulsive condition, in which man is so low in his aspirations, so sordid in his pursuits, and so squalid in his habits that some do not hesitate to deny his claim to identity of origin with other members of the human race.

The other extreme of society, though not indeed the state which the providence and grace of God, in union with the free activity of Christian men, will hereafter produce, is found among a people who make the forces of nature subservient to their use and welfare—where wise and equitable laws guard every interest which

promotes human happiness—and where a future world, in which the soul will enjoy an ample field for the exercise of its immortal powers, is a matter of certain knowledge, and on the part of many an object of earnest pursuit.

Now, in both these extremes of society, Christianity is equally needful—in France as well as in the Fiji Islands—though in the lowest extreme it shows perhaps the result of its power most conspicuously. For Commodore Wilkes, of the American Navy, says of the Fijians: “They are truly wretched in the strongest sense of the term, and degraded beyond the conception of civilized people. For the sake of decency, and to avoid shocking my readers, I have refrained from relating many things which happened under my own eyes.” In their language and habits cannibalism appears in its most disgusting and horrible aspect. Persons of the same tribe and village fall victims to the greed of their neighbors, who devour them roasted, in the midst of attendant exhibitions of the most shocking and repulsive kind. The sick and aged are sometimes buried alive. The relatives hold a wake over the intended victim while he yet lives. They then cover him deep with earth, and go into mourning after this unnatural and horrid burial. At the funeral of a married man, they often strangle his widow. The filth and ghastly savageness which mark their social customs and their general habits are very prominent in their superstitions and religious ceremonies. They greatly suffer through apprehension of enchantments

and pernicious influences of apparitions, ghosts and wizards. Chastity has no place among them. The women wear almost no clothing, and they know not how to blush. Many a wild animal's lair shows more neatness than their huts. It was in 1834 that two Christian missionaries determined to try the effect of the Gospel on these most abject wretches of the human race. They had no doubt indeed as to the efficacy of the Gospel, for it was their faith in it, as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," which made them exiles from the land of their birth and patient toilers in that weary moral waste. They have not been disappointed. Thousands of those vicious cannibals have been advanced to the first stages in the course of Christian civilization. They read the Bible in their own tongue. They endure persecution even unto death. They gather every Sabbath into large and orderly assemblies for the worship of the true God. They clothe themselves in decent apparel. They show the fruits of Christian culture, industry, thrift, purity, piety, charity.

Their conversion from heathenism to Christianity, placing them in sharp contrast to their pagan countrymen, emblazons the power of our holy religion to accomplish such marvelous results in the moral renovation of men as no other agency on earth can effect. But the Christian faith shows its divine energy as well in the learned and eloquent Saul of Tarsus as in some seal-eater of Greenland—as well in the most illustrious Presidents of the American nation as in the most squalid cannibals of the Fiji Islands. In this point

of view, it is unique and in the sharpest contrast with all other religions.

It is equally diverse from them in its opposition to the natural heart of man. Even the Greek, Roman, and Moslem systems accord with the native bent of our apostacy. They prescribe services and offer rewards which are congenial to the depravity of the heart. In the gorgeous pomp of idol-worship, the splendid sacrificial processions, the magnificent theatrical exhibitions, the sublime temples of the gods, and the august and solemn rites of the priesthood—what attractions were ever present in the Greek and Roman systems! In the lust of conquest, the hope of gain, and the offer of pleasure—how great the charms of Islamism! Their future rewards also are as low as the evil passions and sensual appetites of men. What the former promised in the Fields of Elysium and the latter in the Gardens of Paradise alike appeal to base principles of our nature.

How different is the Gospel. It not only declares the Christian life to be self-denial and cross-bearing, but also boldly affirms that the carnal mind is enmity against God—that what is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of Heaven. It commands us to walk in the Spirit, and requires us to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. It fails not to say: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It demands universal repentance, and a course of life in many points directly contrary to man's natural inclinations.

And now what are the chief rewards which it offers for all this repentance, renunciation of natural desires, endurance of hardness as good soldiers, and persecutions as martyrs of the faith? They are such as imply or require a thorough and radical change of the whole heart. They are chiefly the presence and vision of the Almighty, whom every man knows he has offended—the service and praise of the just Ruler, whom every man knows he has disobeyed—the society of the holy, whom every man knows he has shunned—the utter and eternal absence of all sin, which every man knows he has loved. In a word, the future rewards which Christianity offers are as undesirable, to any man in his natural state, as the most discordant and jarring noises are painful to one whose ear is most delicately attuned and trained to the harmony of the sweetest music. They are lonely exile to one whose heart yearns for his dearest kindred in his native land. They are the heat, and dust, and tumult of a populous city to one who is certainly dying for the want of the quiet scenes, the cool temperature and the healthful air of the country. This is what they are to the unregenerate soul.

In almost every way, therefore, Christianity opposes the natural heart; and in this real opposition, as well as in its vast superiority, it appears in contrast with other religions.

Yet its contrast is none the less in its fitness for every people on the earth, and through all the ages of time.

It is said that Mahomet made the boast that his religion would spread as far as the guttural sound of a particular Arabic letter was heard. But the genius of his religion is local. It is fit for minds which the East only can produce. So Judaism, in its purity, could cover a narrow field only. Goethe, in Wilhelm Meister, puts it in the division of heathen religions. The system of ancient Egypt could flourish only in the valley of the Nile. Our North American Indians could not have transferred their systems beyond the bounds of their native rivers and forests. So we may traverse Asia, and Africa, and the islands of the sea, and we shall find the case the same.

It is not so with Christianity. Among Alps and Appenines—the Alleghanies and the Andes—along the ice-bound shores of Greenland, and beneath the burning sun of the tropics, our holy religion is adapted to all our race. Wherever the gospel-herald proclaims it, by sea or land—whether in the snow-hut of the Labrador Esquimaux or in the mud-kraals of an African Zulu—whether in the shadow of the pagados of India or beside the lava-streams of Mauna Loa—he cannot tell the half of it before the hearer perceives its adaptation to his case. Wherever its divine accents fall upon the ear of a believer, it makes him a new creature in Christ Jesus. It removes fear, creates hope, kindles love and calls forth gratitude. It leads the lost soul from nature's darkness into God's marvelous light. It translates him from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It

makes the whole multitude of its subjects, of every kindred, and people, and tongue and nation under the whole heaven, all one in Christ Jesus. It unites them all in one body to one common Head. It impels them to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. It unfolds, exercises and strengthens all their best powers. It improves all their resources. It sanctifies talent and consecrates wealth. It comforts the sorrowful, restrains the rash, gives wisdom to the simple and solace to the wounded in spirit.

"The balm of life, the cure of woe." It is here, as elsewhere, in perfect contrast with all other religious systems.

Its fitness for all men in all times suggests the perpetuity of its doctrines and the certainty of its final prevalence throughout the earth.

The history of our race is a perpetual change. Decay is also written on almost every work of human hands. Great cities and empires, like Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, rise, flourish, culminate, fall. The ruins of thousands of years yield up to the antiquarian the adornments of regal palaces in Assyrian capitals, but the worship of Belus is sunk so low that the hand of resurrection itself cannot reach it. Tyre ceases not to fulfil the prediction of the Hebrew prophet, for it is a place where fishermen now spread their nets. Its broken and fallen columns, and its massive foundations sufficiently mark the site of a city which once held London's present place in the commercial world. Then it was the emporium whose

merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honorable of the earth. Then, as Ezekial so accurately narrates, Syria, Persia, Egypt, Spain, Greece and every part of the ancient world hastened to lay their most precious products at the feet of this ocean queen, who sat enthroned on ivory, and covered with blue and purple, while the Gammadim in her towers hanged their shields upon her walls and made her beauty perfect. But where is the religion of Tyre? It has more utterly perished than this famous city. So change and decline mark the course of other systems of false religion. Boodhism, the most ancient form of heathenism, shows the greatest vicissitudes. But Christianity maintains its essential doctrines from age to age. Its Holy Books grow old and venerable, but never obsolete. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, it rests upon the Rock ; and though heaven and earth shall pass away, His words shall not pass away. Against His Church the gates of hell shall never prevail. He who knows the end from the beginning has foretold the triumph of the Christian cause at last.

When He said that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, He declared much more than the moral deadness of human nature—much more than its utter inability to accomplish its salvation through the activity and improvement of its own inherent and native energy—more even than we discern in the words of Augustine, who

called our race a mass of perdition. Our Lord declares, in His similitude, that His kingdom would certainly become universal in the earth. That, fixing its seat in the hearts of men, and thence working outwardly through the human consciousness, it would influence and vivify all the relations of life in the family, the neighborhood, the circle of commerce, and the government of the state. It is the work of time from age to age to fulfill His infallible declaration. Already more than a quarter of the inhabitants of the earth are within the nations who bear the Christian name; and it is the clear, resistless and evermore-impressive voice of history that the vital and effective principle in the world is the Christian religion. There is no progress of mankind beyond its growing sphere. The outward form of this religion, like every other vital unfolding organism, may indeed shape itself more or less according to the external relations of the Church, the political condition of the nations which it reaches, enters and permeates; the social customs, scientific culture, civil, military and literary activity of the times and countries in which it works; and even the current philosophy and other peculiar traits of particular classes or tribes of men. But, on the other hand, it makes all these subservient and auxiliary to its great object—the moral and spiritual renovation of the world. Though it is the most rigid system in the universe, and as inflexible as God himself in respect to its fundamental principles; yet, in its adaptation to the wants of men, it is of all things the most pliant.

It is a thousand fold more firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages than the Rocky Mountains are settled upon their granite base ; yet, like the waters in a meadow, it spreads in every direction, and seeks every low place that it may quicken and cheer every beautiful thing. Since it came from heaven and exalts to heaven, nothing on earth can be too high for it to reach, support and elevate ; and since it stoops down to rescue the fallen from the utmost verge of the horrible pit, nothing on this side the gates of hell is too low to feel its healthful and saving influence. Christianity is indeed the very genius of salvation. She seizes upon time and occasion and uses them to accomplish her high designs. If the exclusive wall of China is broken down for the purpose of introducing or maintaining a destructive traffic, she is on the alert to enter the breach first of all, bearing in her hands no weapons of carnage, nor poisonous drugs to ruin the bodies and souls of men, but the Bible, whose leaves, like those of the Tree of Life, are for the healing of the nations. If the isolation of Japan is overcome, and its straits are made wide enough for the commerce of the world, she forthwith sends her cross-bearers to evangelize the nation. If the lowly millions of northern Europe are set free from the heavy chains which bound them to the earth and made them as sordid as the soil and grime in which these unhappy serfs were compelled to delve, she begins without delay to supply them with those Holy Words of the Son of Man which are spirit and life. If the dusky natives of Southern

America find their fetters broken in the violent shock and stern suppression of a rebellious war, she employs a thousand agencies to fashion these dark millions into worthy citizens of the Republic, and intelligent worshippers of the true God. And wherever she goes she carries in her hands the Balm of Gilead to cure the maladies of sin. Thus she advances, through the animation of the Divine Spirit and the support of Almighty Power, on her slow and majestic march to take possession of the globe. What though her King elaborates His eternal plans throughout a long succession of ages—what though men begin to breathe and then die—what though nations rise, flourish and decay, and the earth itself grows hoary with years—yet God will hasten its redemption in His own good time. We shall not see it, but it will come. The Word, and the Spirit and the Providence of God all attest it. He who sits upon the circle of the earth fails not to carry forward His comprehensive designs. Though the heathen rage, and the nations in wild excitement dash themselves against each other; though the sea roar and the heavens gather blackness—Jehovah, serene in the majesty of His power, shall send forth His Word and Spirit to still the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people. He will send the Gospel to all our race, and establish righteousness throughout the whole earth.

The certainty that all men will hereafter see the adaptation of this religion to their own case, is a demonstration of its divine origin. No human wisdom

and foresight could frame such a religion—one altogether suitable for all the nations of the world, and for all the relations of life, at all times in the course of human history, and in all places on the surface of the globe. Every false religion changes its principles with the development of the minds, or the variation of the circumstances of its votaries—as the science and religion of Europe and the government of Great Britain are now modifying the Brahminism of India. But Christianity set out with the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head ; and for six thousand years the history of the world has shed more and more light upon this divine declaration, which the true religion has never ceased to embrace and hold forth. And every step of its progress is cumulative evidence of its unshaken and imperishable truth. A thorough test of all other religions demonstrates their falsity. They cannot bear the light. They are the wonderful images which the optical instrument exhibits in the darkened chamber. They flee away before the incoming sunshine. But Christianity appears all the more glorious as the light shines more brightly. Every investigation of its principles, every pressure upon its foundations, only establishes the whole structure more firmly. Every effort to undermine its immoveable base only discloses more impressively the adamantine pillars on which it securely rests. No intelligent mind can ignore this contrast between Christianity and all other religions ; none can do it away. There is, moreover, one way only to

account for it, namely, that Christianity is from God and must be true, while every other religion is false, and human in its origin. It is, therefore, plain, that we may rest with perfect confidence in the religion of the Bible, which evermore shows us God manifest in the flesh.

This is not all. We should cherish it in our hearts, practice it in our lives, and commend it to the acceptance of every man. If it comes into the human soul and renovates it—if it proves itself perfectly adapted to meet the deepest wants of all classes of persons—if it comes from heaven and is destined to prevail throughout the earth—every man should welcome it to his bosom, accept its guidance, obey its voice, and enjoy its salvation. And all who have received it should put forth their best efforts to spread it abroad as far and wide as possible, that every soul on earth may speedily rejoice in its benign influence, and feel its elevating power.

V.

The Heavenly Commonwealth.

“Our conversation is in heaven.”—PAUL.

THIS heavenly commonwealth is worthy of a devotion beyond our love and zeal for our native land and nation ; and as it is proper to find motives for Christian activity in every providential event—in all the vicissitudes of national affairs, as well as in all the changes of our personal experience—we may glance at the patriotism whose measure we should exceed in our devotion to the heavenly commonwealth ; then consider the superiority of this celestial community to the State and the Church on earth, and so proceed to specify certain elements of its supreme and eternal excellence, and various conditions of its enlargement.

I. Every man, especially every good man, feels an interest in our national affairs ; for the love of country is one of the strongest passions of the soul. It is not always the purest and most peaceful. Sometimes it performs a bloody part in the history of states and nations. It is less generous, kindly and diffusive than love to man ; yet we deem it a noble virtue ; and it is

a mighty power, for it moves every heart. It was because the Genius of the North felt it, that he wrote the familiar strain :

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said :
This is my own, my native land !”

The world over, in every soul, there is a warm sentiment which responds to these simple words, as harp-strings to the skillful touch. We may well believe that the best men feel this sentiment more deeply than others. Our Lord felt it most deeply.

Behold the Man who loves His country with all the purity and strength of His holy nature ! From the heights which overtop the capital of His nation, He looks down upon the city, and weeps. It is not Alexander weeping for another world to conquer. A greater than Alexander is here ! And the sight of the capital of His nation, doomed to destruction, opens the fountain of grief in His great heart, even as the prophet's rod caused the river to flow from the desert rock. It is no private and personal sorrow that makes Him weep. He is in the height of His greatest earthly honor. The multitude around Him makes the day memorable, bearing the palm to show forth His triumph and His praise. He is about to enter the capital with joyful acclamations on every hand. The children sing hosanna, and throngs of men already hail Him as the Redeemer and King of His people, the Saviour of His country.

In these circumstances, He looks upon the city, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth," and glorious in its marvelous history. The valor of David has made it great, and the wisdom of Solomon has spread its fame to the ends of the earth. Here Jehovah has shown His presence, and here the prophets of the Lord have spoken in His name. Here the father of the faithful has heard the heavenly Voice that saved his son though his arm was already lifted to strike the fatal blow. It is the Holy City, venerable with the miraculous history of many generations and dear to the soul as the associations of thousands of years. Jesus loves Jerusalem. In its public streets and sacred temple—in its open courts and private dwellings—He has spoken those words of truth and wrought those miracles of grace which proclaim Him divine. It is the chief city of His nation, and His patriot heart beats like the sea while He beholds the daughter of Zion resting upon her mountain base and radiant with the splendors of the setting sun. The vision is gorgeous. But the eye of Jesus looks beyond the present scene. Far away He sees the gathering legions. They fly as eagles to the prey. The shadow of death falls from their wings upon the royal capital. It is no more the glorious city. It has become a helpless corpse. "And where the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

The doom of the city is come. Its wound is incurable. Therefore Jesus weeps. He has toiled to save it with all a prophet's and a patriot's zeal; but the

peace of its people is forever hidden from their eyes. Yet even now He loves the daughter of Zion, though her house is left unto her desolate.

The desolation of any land restrains not the love for their country in the hearts of its children. The captive Jews sing no cheerful songs in Babylon. The Iceland youth, conveyed to a foreign shore to be taught the arts and manners of a milder clime, pines for the mossy vales and ice-clad hills of his native isle, and from the most beautiful region of the earth he turns away sighing : " Oh, it would be a beautiful country were it only covered with snow and reindeer." The exile from the tropics longs for the rich luxuriance of his native groves and fields ; and so every dweller upon the mountains or in the vales feels the attachment which binds him to the land of his birth.

And far more than scenes and forms of nature, the structure and genius of social manners, civil government, and religious institutions usually show their power to knit the soul of every man to his native soil, and make all the brave think it grateful and just to die for their country. We may well foster this virtue in others, and cherish a noble, manly, Christian patriotism in our own hearts.

I would repress no man's love of country. He may breathe the air, and feel the stirring enterprize, and the hardy daring of those who live neighbors to the sea, that ever lift up the voice and call them to seek wealth and knowledge upon its heaving breast ; or he may build his home amid the breezy hills, or set his

nest on high, like the eagle's, among the lofty mountains, where the forms of nature, ever rising heavenward, lift up the soul, and make it brave and true ; or he may plow the fertile plain, and love the rich fruitfulness which rewards his toil. It is natural and well that every man should love his own country.

But the heart of the patriot loves something higher than the soil which he treads under his feet ; more glorious than the everlasting hills which lift up his thoughts on high ; more sublime than ocean's boundless deep that ever invites him to adventurous life and bold endeavor.

Even the heavens above us, with those sentinel-stars that so faithfully watch and slowly march their wonted rounds, can present in their structure and movement only the impressiveness of material grandeur. Men are nobler than mountains ; human souls sublimer than sounding seas and shining stars ; and patriotism loves not so much the city as the citizens—not so much the mountains, plains, and ocean shores, as the freemen who people them—not so much the soil as the State.

What, then, is it, that patriotism most loves ? What but a nation whose citizens are free, brave, just and good—men who know and do their duty ; a nation whose sovereignty is vested in well-established laws ; a nation whose domestic, social, civil and religious institutions are the outgrowth of those free, vital principles which produce the benign progress and Christian development of the race ; a nation whose citizens can trace their lineage and their spiritual relation to

heroes for freedom and martyrs for the faith of Jesus ; a nation where every man thinks his own life, as well as his neighbor's, may be properly made a sacrifice to maintain public justice and righteous laws.

Let there be such a nation, and its soil may be a barren rock ; its territory an island of the sea ; and its climate the dark and boisterous region of clouds and storms ; yet will that rocky island be an eyrie—the home of a power among other nations like an eagle among the birds of feebler wing. The moment such a nation appears,

“ There is seen
The baby figure of the giant mass
Of things to come at large.”

It is such a nation that makes the patriot's heart fire, and his arm steel, in the battle. It is such a nation that ends the conflict with victory or death.

It is plain enough that every man ought to love an orderly and beneficent government, more than he loves his life. He ought to give his blood for its defense, whenever the nation calls for the sacrifice ; for the general rule of history is this : They perish with the sword who take it in a bad cause, or do not take it in a good one. The man who quietly sees a mob tear down a house, takes part in the crime. What, then, is the guilt of that man who unresistingly beholds the destruction of a great nation ? If a national constitution ceases to bind as soon as a party or a faction becomes dissatisfied with its workings, who will ever

make even a compact to facilitate the intercourse of nations, or to end the ravages and calamities of war? Let this theory of public morals come into practice and prevail—let it be understood that any party, at their pleasure, may take the life of the nation—and there will be no more progressive civilization, and no end to the destruction of mankind, till the population of the earth becomes one human being. This is, in fact, to give a speedy reality to the poet's idea of "the last man."

But no true and pure religion permits a revolution of civil government on a principle so vicious. The Bible inculcates the duty of Christians to show themselves loyal and good citizens. To quote the Scripture common places which confirm this remark, would be to set forth the highest moral teaching on all the chief duties of citizenship. This would be a tiresome superfluity. We may, therefore, turn to the consideration of a higher and better communion than the state or nation in the best period of the republic.

II. For our conversation, "which the apostle declares to be in heaven," may undoubtedly mean the concrete body of the people who perform the duty of citizens. It is not the abstract relation or privilege of citizenship; but the organic state, the commonwealth. Conybeare has ventured to render it "life;"* and the learned and pious translators of our common English version of the Bible deemed its meaning to be the performance of a citizen's duty—the course of his

* Life and Epistles of St. Paul. Vol. ii. p. 431. Am. Ed.

daily life. It is not easy to forego such excellent company ; but the larger sense of the word seems to be the best. This preferable interpretation appears to be sustained by the contrast which the apostle brings so prominently into view. This extends beyond the simple idea of walking after his example, or pursuing a Christian course of life, as the opposite of minding earthly things. The enemies of the Cross would seem to be regarded, not as individuals merely, but as an organized body, whose glory is shame, whose religion is gluttony, and whose end is destruction. In opposition to this confederacy is our commonwealth, whose great field of activity is heaven, and whose head is the Lord Jesus Christ. Him we expect thence in due season to fit even the body of our humiliation for the heavenly state.

This view of the subject is not without the support of one, whose keen insight and sound judgment, all, who had the great advantage of his personal instructions, learned to place second to no other man's in a matter of this kind. Dr. Robinson, in his *Lexicon*, defines the word *πολίτευμα* so as to harmonize with polity, police, politics, and other terms from the same root. It is, then, the heavenly commonwealth, the *Civitas Dei* in the highest sense, that we should regard as our own.

Augustine certainly had in mind the idea of a noble state, when he said : " Let them give us such warriors as the Christian doctrine requires they should be ; such subjects ; such husbands and wives ; such fathers,

sons, masters, and servants ; such kings and judges ; such payers and receivers of tribute as they ought to be according to the precepts of the Christian doctrine ; and would they still venture to assert, that this doctrine is opposed to the State? Nay, would they not rather confess, without hesitation, that, if it were followed, it would prove the salvation of the State?" Truly it would save any state, and make a nobler nation than has ever sprung up and flourished on earth ; but even this would not equal the Heavenly Commonwealth ; for it is plain, that Christians are, as Augustine says, "citizens of a state whose king is the truth, whose laws are love, and whose duration is eternity." And, as he remarks in a different place : "It is one thing, from the mountain's shaggy top to see the land of peace, and to find no way thither ; and another to keep on the way thither, guarded by the host of the heavenly General."* So it appeared, hundreds of years before Augustine was born, to one who was under the protection of the heavenly General, and who wrote to Diognetus : "Christians are not separated from others by country, by language, or by customs. They are confined to no particular cities. They dwell no where in cities by themselves. They do not use a different sort of speech. They do not affect a singular mode of dress. They dwell in their cities as every man's lot is cast. They follow the customs of each country in dress, and diet, and manner of life ; yet they show the wonderful nature.

* Confessions : Book vii, Sec. 27. Oxford Ed. 1848.

of their own peculiar polity. They dwell in their own country, but as sojourners. They abide on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They are in the world what the soul is in the body; and Christians dwelling in the world, are not of the world." They belong to the heavenly commonwealth. They are citizens of the New Jerusalem. They are subjects of that divine kingdom, which shall continue for ever in heavenly blessedness. It is a peerless communion, far surpassing the whole Church of God on earth.

Yet the Church on earth, and even a particular branch of it, one may surely love more than life; for where is the Christian who would not lay down his life for the brethren? Where is the Christian who would not as soon die for the Church as for the country? The Mother of us all is certainly worthy of our intense devotion; and yet the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of the faithful in all lands, is but a system of naturalization-offices for the heavenly commonwealth. Our best service in the Church is merely the fostering of our own loyalty to the divine kingdom, the celestial state, and the gathering of men to take the oath of allegiance to it. This system may indeed appear to be very extensive, orderly, and systematic. It may rest on such principles, embrace such persons, and possess such a divine life as to be worthy of earnest love. But, after all, it is only a small part of the whole body of citizens who are fulfilling an inferior agency. It is rather a feeble army, in the country of an enemy, and defending itself and gather-

ing a few trophies on a retreat, than the mighty nation to which that retreating, though militant army is making its weary way. Earth is the outlying province of rebellion. Heaven is the realm of glory and the city of triumph.

Yet this view of the Church on earth should not dishearten us. It should not abate our love and zeal for the saintly host, which has no equal in this world. Surely, among mortals, that which is noblest, divinest, best, is the militant army of the living God, under the Captain of our salvation, volunteers in the day of His power. And we may well love a particular division of this host, firmly believing it to be first of all. In a high degree, it shows the best qualities of the other divisions. In a greater degree than almost any other, it is in harmony with the whole body. To speak without a figure, it presents those features of doctrine, polity, and worship which most commend themselves to the judgment and affections of the greater number of Christians in this country, as well as among Biblical Christians in all lands. It holds fast to the doctrines of grace. It sets God, and not man, in the centre of its theology, so that every part crystalizes around this centre. It looks to God's eternal plan of redemption, and not to man's ever-changing acts of volition for the assurance of salvation and immortal joy. It deems God's Spirit, and not man's conscience, the source of divine, spiritual life. It esteems Christ's mediation, and not human merit, the ground of a sinner's justification before God. In these great prin-

ciples of Christian experience and action, it harmonizes with most evangelical worshippers of Jesus. It also holds to the priesthood of all Christians; to the parity of the ministry among themselves; to the Church membership of believers not only, but also of their children; to the celebration of baptism with water applied to believers and their households; to the administration of two sacraments; to the communion of the people in both the body and the blood of our Lord; to freedom, not formality, in public prayers and psalms and hymns of praise; to the prominence of preaching in the service of the sanctuary; to the association of particular churches; to the regulation of a part by the whole; and the government of the whole by representatives of the people, duly chosen according to law for the purpose; and in all these points it is in keeping with the principles and polity of most Biblical Christians.

This branch of the Church delights in the gentle and frequent dewdrops of refreshing grace not only, but also in the plentiful showers and the copious rain of revivals. There is no fear of holy and pure excitements, and no dread of liberty in law. It appreciates the heavenly contemplations of Rutherford in prison, and Livingston's overwhelming eloquence at Shotts; and both combined, with true missionary and apostolic zeal, in our own Edwards and Brainerd. It has a family interest in the Christian courage of the Covenanter and the Puritan. It owes its sympathy with the religious endurance of the men of Leyden

and of Derry, and shares the joy of their triumph. It shows its worthies in the closet, the pulpit, the marts of commerce, the field of missions, the cabinet of state, and the scenes of patriotic warfare. It has a history which is an honorable heritage. It is a worthy division of God's elect and militant host. It is distinguished, not for that kind of separation from worldly affairs which permits it to conform to the world, but for that kind which makes it confront the world, and testify against it, that its deeds are evil. It is not unmindful of its enviable character and prominent position. But it does not esteem a part more than the whole. It has a congenial heart for all who maintain the union with the Head. It would gain the proper end of the Church on earth through the most effective combinations of Immanuel's power. It is ready to fill the place and perform the service which the Great Captain assigns to it; and when it has accomplished its warfare here, every one of its faithful, whatever his rank or station, desires, with all his comrades, to join the innumerable host of heaven, who indeed are no more militant, though mighty. They form the population of the majestic empire of peace, the commonwealth of heaven.

III. This celestial communion appears attractive and august in view of the extent of its territory, the perfection of its government, the vastness of its population, the high development of their character and the endless duration of their existence and blessedness.

1. Where can you fix a limit to the field of their

activity and the scene of their joy? We cannot believe that one little spot of creation, which we call earth, is the only place in the universe which God has made for the activity and enjoyment of the souls whom He has redeemed with His own blood and sanctified through the renovation of His own Spirit. We cannot bear the thought that heaven is such an insignificant point as some narrow minds would fain make us believe. Do not the material heavens extend beyond the reach of thought? Who undertakes to comprehend the extent of a universe so vast that our solar system is in reality no more to it than a drop to the ocean? And while the union of modern science and modern skill discloses one such universe after another in rapid succession, like the startling events of an impetuous revolution, shall we imagine that God has made no moral cosmos—no spiritual organization commensurate with this material vastness and grandeur? Are we so sordid and earthly as to believe that the principalities and powers in heavenly places, who learn God's manifold wisdom by the Church, are so contracted as not to extend into the utmost field whither the Word of God has gone forth to create material worlds? We can very well accept the testimony of scientific men as to the vastness of the sidereal universe; and we can equally well accept the testimony of inspired men as to the extent of the Redeemer's kingdom in all places of His dominion. And McCosh happily says: "By so much as the mental exceeds the material, and the spiritual the sensible, do

the discoveries of Divine revelation transcend all the discoveries of natural science, when the former discloses ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels and ministering spirits. The one class of discoveries tends to enlarge our conception of the universe more than even the other ; and if the mind is enlarged in the enlarged contemplation of the physical, how much more must it be elevated by the contemplation of the moral and the spiritual ?” *

Now do not the men of inspiration testify, in the most clear and impressive way, that the reign of Christ extends over all creatures ? “ All the angels of God worship Him.” His own words make us sure that He has all power in heaven and earth. He is highly exalted “ far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” that the whole creation should adore the name of Jesus and own Him Lord. In the Bible, as John Howe says, “ the blood of His cross is intimated to extend to all things both in heaven and earth ; to diffuse an influence through the universe ; to be the cement of the creation, in what part and for what time it shall continue, subordinately to the Creator’s pleasure and purposes ; and that by Him who shed it even as such, all things are said to consist ; and that besides His natural right, He hath acquired by the suberabundant value of this sacrifice (the odors

* “ Divine Government ;” Book II., Chap. i, Sec. 7.

of which are spread through all worlds), a universal dominion ; and particularly to be Head of all principalities and powers.”*

Now the citizens of the heavenly commonwealth are joint heirs with Christ. They share the honors of His throne. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” Has not our Lord Himself taught us that we shall be equal to the angels? And where they dwell, or whither they move, may we not follow or abide? “And when we are told of many heavens, above all which our Lord Jesus is said to have ascended, are all these heavens only empty solitudes—uninhabited glorious deserts?”† We shall behold God’s face in righteousness, and wherever He shows us His presence there we shall experience fulness of joy. However wide His reign over all visible and invisible things whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, His realm extends not beyond the boundaries of our heavenly commonwealth. Having the universe for the field of our activity and the scene of our joy, we may well glory in our own conversation in heaven.

2. It is a commonwealth under a perfect government. Its chief Ruler is “infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” Its law is love, and we do this principle great injustice when we assign it, among moral beings, the place and force of gravitation among

* “Living Temple,” Chap viii., Sec 7.

† Howe’s “Redeemer’s Dominion.”

physical objects, for the dethronement of gravitation seems to be near at hand. The statement of this law may soon give place to the enunciation of a higher generalization and a more comprehensive truth. As all other physical forces are now thought to be one, so this is likely to fall into the same unity. As all others are convertible into each other, so we shall probably soon cease to speak of matter attracting matter with a force which varies inversely as the square of the distance. This idea of the variation or diminution of force according to distance does not harmonise with the current doctrine of the conservation of force and the convertibility of forces. Richard Owen, therefore, as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, suggests the reduction of all other forces "together with gravitation and neuricity to interchangeable modes of action of one and the same all-pervading life essence."* This anticipation of the unity of all forces, both physical and vital, intimates that the force of gravitation may be lost in the discovery and announcement of some higher and more comprehensive unity. But love is of God, and will never lose its power, for God is love. We admire the regular movements of the solar system, but there is a higher and more ethereal beauty in the faultless activity of a moral system whose every member is under the perfect control of the law of love. This is the government of our heavenly commonwealth. God is love, and His spirit pervades it. He rules all things

* Address : Sept. 22, 1858.

for its welfare, for He is "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And under his infallible guidance we shall be "holy and without blame before Him in love;" and wide as the empire of the sinless will be the sway of this unfailing law. What a contrast to every nation and society on earth! How unhappy the man who has not received a birth from above—the grace of regeneration for this heavenly commonwealth!

3. Many millions have experienced this renovation, and doubtless many millions more will receive the same grace through the mediation of Jesus Christ. They will be constituents of the celestial state. But not these only; for it includes both "the spirits of just men made perfect" and also "an innumerable company of angels." Indeed, all thrones, dominions, principalities and powers in heavenly places are gathered together under one Head in Christ Jesus. Millions of inhabitants make any city a place of activity, wealth and power. They usually make it also a seat of culture and a source of renown. But "consider the inexpressible numerousness of the other world's inhabitants, with the excellences wherein they shine." Who, indeed, can number the citizens of the New Jerusalem? Go, write down the stars of every universe, tell the leaves of every forest, count the grains of sand on every ocean-shore; but will they all equal the innumerable multitude which no one can number? Who can enumerate the myriads of the unfallen—those elect angels

who enjoy all the blessedness of their first estate, and shine with all their original brightness? Who can foretell how many regenerate souls will yet rise from earth to satisfy the Redeemer for the travail of His soul? The intimations of God's Word, and the analogy of all His works within the compass of our knowledge, make us more than ready to believe, that our commonwealth in heaven is not less august and imposing in the number of its population than the universe is stupendous in the vastness of its extent of space.

4. And who can make known the degree of their holy development? who can measure the height of their love and joy, or sound the depth of their wisdom and sanctity? Can imagination soar to the utmost limit of their knowledge? Can you comprehend their power and will to show forth the glory of God? Who can disclose the nature and the vastness of their combinations to enhance their own delight and to celebrate their Saviour's praise? Those who are counted worthy of that world, and the resurrection of the dead, shall be equal to the angels that excel in strength. And when God has sent these heavenly ones to do His will upon earth, what wonders have they wrought among men! How glorious, then, in power and excellence are the citizens of our heavenly commonwealth! Who does not wish to share their honor and their joy for ever and ever?

5. Their privileges have a worth beyond our computation; for the benefits of their citizenship are eternal. The rights and privileges of all human govern-

ments soon come to an end. But the advantages of the heavenly state will never cease. The soul will never experience trouble, bereavement or anguish in that state of perfection, holiness and love. Here all the joys of knowledge, wisdom, health, strength, affluence and affection fail us ; for the grave opens to receive all mankind.

“ Empires decay and nations die,
Our hopes to winds are given ;
The vernal blooms in ruin lie,
Death reigns o'er all beneath the sky—
There's nothing sure but heaven.”

However we may neglect it, the unseen things are the great realities. It is not all nothingness beyond the compass of this little world and this short life. The great ones of the earth vaunt themselves and glory in their strength, wisdom, riches, power, influence or renown among the rulers of the world ; but all they prize is worthless in comparison with the possessions of the holy, who have the vastness of heaven for the field of their activity, and the duration of eternity for the manifestation of their worth and the enjoyment of their perfect blessedness. The present must yield to the perpetual—the transient age to the timeless ages. To give secular affairs a higher place in our hearts than heaven's great realities is to invert all order—to make the fountain larger than the ocean—the sowing greater than the harvest. It is to esteem the benefits of a transitory state more desirable than the blessings of an eternal empire. Wherefore let us who receive a

kingdom which cannot be moved, have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Our glorious commonwealth is in heaven, where the names of its citizens are already written—enrolled in the capital of the universe, as inhabitants of the city whose foundations are indestructible, and whose builder and maker is God.

Who desires not to share the joy and the glory of this heavenly commonwealth—to have his soul full of light, and strength, and peace in the communion of the blest—to have his heart enlarge with the love of innumerable millions of the holy, and to love them with an ardor surpassing the affection of father, mother, son, daughter, husband or wife?

Do you wish to be free from solicitude and fear, and to have all your feelings, thoughts and actions move evermore in the path of rectitude? Would you be ever active without weariness and ever conducive to the welfare of others without need of reward? You may find more than you desire in the heavenly communion of the beatified, who are in the presence of God, and there experience fulness of joy, every one owning and praising the grace which converts a sinful soul into a glorified saint, restores him to perfect harmony with himself and his Maker, and establishes him in holiness forever.

IV. Does the inquiry arise: what preparation is necessary; what knowledge must be gained; what language learned; what character acquired; in order to secure the fadeless honors and the eternal felicity

of the glorified? The constitution of the heavenly state is near at hand. It is not in this world only that the Word of God has a priceless worth. Our commonwealth in heaven is based on its principles. All who make God's statutes their songs in the house of their pilgrimage, while passing through the journey of this life, will find them a delight and a direction in the home of their souls—the Father's house on high. The same pure principles of conduct evermore control all the holy there which God has given to guide the footsteps of His people here. The same affections, which afford supreme delight to the sinless in heaven, are the very affections which the Bible requires in our own hearts here and now. The love to God and to His people which fills the soul with rapture in the skies, is the same in kind which Christians experience here this hour. To know the will of God and to keep it is, therefore, the best preparation for citizenship and active participation in the heavenly commonwealth. Allegiance, union, devotion to its Head will secure the possession of its unfading honors.

You feel an interest in the life and prosperity of the republic, whose welfare you are zealous to promote. You do well. But it is the more delightful privilege of all Christians, through the grace of God in Christ Jesus, to augment the population and to share the glory of a commonwealth unspeakably superior to the greatest and best nation of earth.

There are, indeed, two highly important objects, which promote the glory of God, for which all Chris-

tians should live and labor in this world. The one is their own progressive sanctification—their own personal preparation for the service and enjoyment of God in the heavenly communion over which He is the Head. The other is their aggressive achievements for the salvation of lost men. There is often a close union of these two lines of action. The Christian often grows in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according as he is active and zealous to secure the salvation of the perishing. Mere contemplation makes no one eminently virtuous. Action and exercise are essential to firm and sound health. But bodily exercise profiteth little in comparison with the activity of soul requisite to increase the number of citizens in the heavenly commonwealth. Men naturally come into other nations ; but a birth from above must introduce them into the communion of heaven ; and all Christians should be eager and diligent to bring as many as possible to the standard and government of Immanuel. The matter in hand is not the transfer of a man's civil citizenship from one kingdom, empire, or republic to another ; yet patriotism exults in the prosperity of one's native land, and the increase of his nation. How, then, should the Christian seek the conversion of a soul from apostasy to fealty, from rebellion to loyalty, under the government of God. Infinite wisdom makes this conversion usually depend upon Christian efforts. God might have made holy angels His sole agents to enlarge the heavenly communion. and replenish the

place which the fallen angels left. But He has not chosen them only for this purpose. He has directed Christians to pray for sinners, and to plead with them, in order to save them from the thralldom of Satan and to give them a heritage in the kingdom of God. The unbelieving are already under the wrath of Jehovah, and may pass at any moment beyond the reach of His effectual calling and His saving grace. Should Christians make no efforts to pluck them as brands from the burning? On the contrary, should not our efforts be without delay or wavering and with all watchfulness, energy and zeal? Does not the importance of the matter demand such efforts? What object on earth is more important than that for which God has given His Son to death, and for which our Lord has poured forth the blood of His heart? The conversion of sinners is essential to the enlargement, prosperity and joy of our conversation in heaven. For this result we should, therefore, never cease to pray and strive. The interests at issue are too momentous for irresolute, fickle, and feeble efforts. Exertion, energy, persistence, courage, are demanded in the warfare between the forces and the foes of Christ. To save, extend, enlarge, and exalt a magnificent commonwealth may require the wisdom, devotion, and toils of many in every grade and rank. But, in this way, glorious victories have been already won; and the knowledge of success in the past may well impart confidence and courage in the present struggle, and inspire hope of success in the future. The expectation of success may be half the battle; and to

add a new citizen to the loyal in the Redeemer's government, you need not impart any new faculties to the sinner, nor take away any old ones. Cause him to change his mode of using his present powers ; let him return from his apostacy ; cease his disobedience to legal and rightful authority ; take the law of love to God and men, not his self-will and selfishness, for the guide of his conduct in all his activity and relations to heaven and earth. Let him also seek divine forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and trust in the one Mediator for the atonement of his sins and the acceptance of his submission to sovereign authority and immaculate justice. Let him thus, with all his heart, forsake sin, trust the Saviour, love God, and keep His commandments ; and he is forthwith regenerated and converted—that is, he is withdrawn from the company of those who glory in their shame and mind earthly things, whose end is destruction ; and he is introduced into the communion of those whose conversation is in heaven. And his repentance will cause joy even among the angels there ; and the Son of God will see another trophy of the travail of His soul.

The object, therefore, may well induce you to set his relations to God and his prospects for eternity plainly before him ; to urge him most earnestly and affectionately to give chief attention to this supremely important matter, and let all others yield to it, so that it may take possession of the deepest feelings and mightiest energies of his soul. Persuade him to consider the character and the claims of God ; the nature

of sin and its dreadful consequences in time and in eternity; quicken his conscience through the manifestation of his Maker's righteous requirements; appeal to his desire for happiness and his fear of misery; entreat him to regard the welfare of others who are under the control of his influence; show him the loss and danger of delay through the consolidation and inveteracy of evil habits; prevail upon him to adopt forthwith such a mode of life as will most likely make him a joyful citizen of the heavenly commonwealth, and best prepare him to enjoy all its bliss and glory forever. Thus his godly life will enlarge the communion in whose welfare and renown he may most happily share.

This course will satisfy his conscience; supply his painful need of a Saviour, and end his ruinous rebellion against the government of God. It will make the divine atonement available for his justification, and cause his deliverance from death and hell to show forth the glory of God. It will prepare him for the performance of all those Christian duties and activities whereby the Holy Spirit has wrought his own conversion; and thus he may in turn be effective in doing his part for the enlargement of the heavenly commonwealth. Thus he may enjoy the fellowship of God and His people, and experience supreme delight and perfect peace of soul under the administration of the wisest, greatest, and best Ruler, who never dies, nor fails to fulfill all the good purposes of His heart.

VI.

National Sovereignty.

"Ill would our ancestors at the Revolution have deserved their fame for wisdom if they had found no security for their freedom, but in rendering their government feeble in its operations and precarious in its tenure, if they had been able to contrive no better remedy against arbitrary power than civil confusion."—EDMUND BURKE.

THE condition of the country has much to do with the life and conduct of every conscientious Christian, as well as with every other man's. Every citizen has certain national or political duties to perform. Every Christian citizen must perform these duties in a Christian spirit and for Christian ends. To show this, we need not recur to such comprehensive Scriptures as these: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"—I Cor. x. 31. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men"—Col. iii. 23. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord"—Rom. xiv. 8.

These are general rules for the conduct of our daily life. But the Bible furthermore gives the most particular directions for the performance of those duties

which we owe to the government of the country. It says : "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid : for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues ; tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honor to whom honor"—Rom. xiii. 1-7. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men ; for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty"—I Tim. ii. 1, 2. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates"—Titus iii. 1. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punish-

ment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well"—I Peter ii. 13, 14. "Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar"—Acts xxv. 10, 11. "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man; for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Jesus said: Show me the tribute-money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He said unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's"—Matt. xxii. 16-21. "And the soldiers likewise demanded of Him, saying, And what shall we do? And He said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely: and be content with your wages"—Luke iii. 14. "And when they had brought them they set them before the council, and the High Priest asked them, saying, Did we not straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? And, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles said, We ought to obey God rather than men"—Acts v., 27-29.

These Scriptures lay upon us sacred and weighty responsibilities in the performance of our duties as citizens. They are but the more important part which the New Testament only contains on this subject. But they are enough to show the authority of the Christian ministry to inculcate political duties and the obligation of Christian citizens to discharge these duties according to the Word of God.

It seems proper to quote so much of the Bible on this point, for the sake of a certain class of persons, whose extreme scrupulosity as to a union of Church and State would almost prevent men from fulfilling their duties to the government of the country in a Christian way and for Christian ends. Such persons do not bear in mind that while the Church should not rule the State nor be ruled by it, there must always be relations of some sort between them. It requires not the philosophic genius of Gioberti to discover this, for there is not now, there never has been, and there never will be, any civilization without some connection of religion and government. In a civilized country you can no more separate them than you can separate the salt from the water of the sea and make the ocean fresh—no more than you can do away the twilight and make a perfect separation of the day from the night. Until man ceases to be a religious as well as a social being, he will be under the necessity of performing political duties for religion and religious duties for civil government; and every man ought to perform all his duties in a Christian way and for Christian ends.

We should bear in mind certain great historic facts which gave being to the present constitution of our National Government, in order to understand our political duties in the momentous state of the country at this hour.*

The first direct step towards forming our national government was made by the Committee of the Sons of Liberty, commonly called "The Presbyterian Junto," of New York City, in May, 1774. At that time, they proposed a General Congress. In the same month, several prominent Virginians avowed their purpose to rescue freedom, even at the cost of a civil war ; to form a domestic convention of the people for their own internal regulation ; and an annual congress of all the colonies for the perpetual assertion of common rights.

At the same time, according to Bancroft, our chief American historian, who is the main authority for the statements which I propose to make, and whose well-chosen words I shall sometimes quote—at that time, "the love of liberty in America did not flash like electricity on the surface : it penetrated the mass with magnetic energy. The port-act had been received on the tenth of May ; and in three weeks, less time than was taken by the unanimous British Parliament for its enactment, the continent, as 'one great commonwealth,' made the cause of Boston its own." The people did this not as colonies, still less as states ; for

* June 28, 1861 ; the fast day on account of the war, appointed and observed by the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

there were no states in the country. They did it as individuals in popular meetings of various kinds and in regular town meetings called for the purpose.

In this way, they made common cause from Canada to the Carolinas. They did not end here. They soon afterwards appointed delegates to the proposed congress. These delegates were chosen in various ways. Those from New York were sent by a Committee of the Sons of Liberty. Those from South Carolina were chosen by a meeting of merchants and planters in Charleston, where the planters outvoted the merchants and elected their own candidates. In Virginia there was a larger convention to make the choice. Illness arrested the course of Jefferson on his journey to it; but he sent a letter to make known his sentiments and views, and among other things he said: "The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state," because the King preferred "the immediate advantage of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice."

These words of Jefferson were unanimously approved by this large Virginia Convention, which put forth all its power to do away with the slave trade after November, 1774.

It was on the fifth of September, in the same year, that delegates, variously chosen from different parts of the country, met in Philadelphia, and called them-

selves "the Congress," and their chief officer "the President." They resolved to vote by colonies, and their own journal gives as the reason for this step, that "the Congress was not then able to procure proper materials for ascertaining the importance of each colony." It was only because no census of the people had ever been made, and they could not ascertain how many inhabitants there were in the different parts of the country, that they did not vote according to the number of the people and directly in behalf of the people from whom they had directly come. They spoke of their own doings as "the united efforts of North America."

This first American Congress unanimously voted to abolish the slave trade, December, 1774; but a majority of the South Carolina delegates, chosen by the planters, afterwards withdrew when it was voted to forbid the export of rice as well as all other products of the country to Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies. In consequence of this secession, "all business was interrupted for several days; but in the end Congress recalled the seceders by allowing the unconditional export of rice."

This Congress refused to petition Parliament; but it appealed to the people, both of English and French speech, in North America, and also published an address to the people of Great Britain. It made the printing press its great ambassador, and submitted its cause to the world. It secured the meeting of another Congress in May, 1775, and invited the attendance of

deputies of the people from all parts of North America, including the French of Canada.

In the early part of May, 1775, the people of Massachusetts were ready to form a new government for the regulation of their local affairs ; but they already acknowledged the supremacy of the Continental Congress, and resolved to wait till they could receive from that body " explicit advice respecting the taking up and exercising the powers of civil government."

The skirmish at Lexington in April had roused the people with a zeal more wonderful than the stupendous patriotic rising which we saw last April after the assault on Fort Sumter. In less than three weeks Ticonderoga and Crown Point, with fifty prisoners and more than a hundred pieces of cannon, were captured in the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress. *Thus the first great blow and capture of the war were made in the name of the Union, by men of New England, on the soil of New York.* There was no State sovereignty in this bold and successful achievement.

A few hours after the capture of Ticonderoga, the second Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia. Its members had been elected in part, at least, by tumultuous public meetings. Like the first Congress, it represented bodies of men which had no recognized legal existence ; yet " the waters had risen ; the old roads were obliterated ; and they must strike out a new path for themselves and the continent." *

* Bancroft, vol. vii., p. 354.

They were wise to do it ; but a Declaration of Independence in the name of the people whom they represented could not be made at once. The offices of the colonies were almost wholly in the hands of royalists, the governors being officers of the British Crown ; and the people of the continent were thus hampered in giving expression and force to their wishes. Their sentiments are partly uttered in the following words of the New York Committee, addressed May 5, 1775, to the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, and through them to all the people of Great Britain : " The inhabitants of this extensive continent can never submit to slavery." " This country will not be deceived by measures conciliatory in appearance." " America is grown so irritable by oppression that the least shock in any part is, by the most powerful sympathetic affection, instantaneously felt through the whole continent. This city is as one man in the cause of liberty ; our inhabitants are resolutely bent on supporting their committee and the intended provincial and continental Congresses." " All the horrors of civil war will never compel America to submit to taxation by authority of Parliament." The people, from Nova Scotia to Florida, were strong in the faith, that they were set apart for the increase and diffusion of civil and religious liberty. In these circumstances it became the duty and the work of Congress, as Bancroft says, " to cement a union and constitute a nation." It did not shrink from the sublime enterprise.

How could they do so in view of the events of the times? Already in this same month of May, 1775, the Presbyterians of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, had made their Declaration of Independence, which the Continental Congress so closely followed more than a year later. They also held forth the supremacy of the Union, saying: "We judge it necessary for the preservation of good order, to form certain rules and regulations for the internal government of this county until laws shall be provided for us by the Congress." The resolutions of the county were sent by a special messenger to the Congress in Philadelphia, and printed in Charleston, to be sent abroad throughout the country.

The Congress now, in June, 1775, undertook to borrow twenty-five thousand dollars "for the use of America"—intending with the money to purchase gunpowder for the continental army; and, on the fifteenth of the month, unanimously elected Washington to command the army.

The next month, they sent their last petition to the King, taking occasion thereby to refuse to treat with him separately as colonies, but offering to treat with him jointly as the Congress. Thus Congress also maintained the supremacy of the Union, which preceded the Declaration of Independence, and was so made known to Great Britain and the world, by the highest authority of America, almost a year earlier than July 4, 1776. By this petition, the Congress, indeed, owned the sovereignty of the King; but at the

same time, as a nation dealing with a nation, and a people speaking to a people, they sent an address to the inhabitants of Great Britain.

Hitherto, there had been delegates in Congress representing the patriotic people of a part of the colonies only. But on the sixth of July, 1775, the provincial assembly of Georgia voted to join the Union and to abolish the slave trade from that day. In the same month, Franklin proposed to the Continental Congress a plan of government for the whole country; and all the English in America and the inhabitants of Ireland, which was still classed with the colonies, were invited to join the Union.

The autumn following, Congress began in good earnest to prepare for claiming the sovereignty of the nation, the Declaration of Independence, and the heavy war that must ensue. The course of events was indeed already bringing independence rapidly to the country. The Congress, therefore, in March, 1776, authorized the people of Canada to set up such a form of government as would be most likely, in their judgment, to produce their happiness. This was perhaps the earliest enabling act of the supreme government of the country for the constitution of a subordinate government.

In April, the Congress branded the slave trade as a crime against humanity, and then, on the sixth of that month, with sovereign power, threw open the lawful commerce of the country to all the world save the subjects of the British King. This act abolished every

British custom-house in the land, and was a virtual declaration of independence. Congress having gone so far, was now urged by several of the provincial assemblies to issue the formal Declaration of Independence. North Carolina led the way on the 12th of April. These subordinate assemblies also began to form Constitutions and laws to regulate the specific affairs of their respective constituencies.

In May, 1776, the form of the national Constitution began to be discussed, and Hawley, of Massachusetts, proposed "an American Parliament with two houses of legislature." In the same month, Virginia instructed her delegates to urge Congress to declare the United Colonies free and independent States, and to form foreign alliances, leaving internal concerns to the respective colonial legislatures. On the same day, May 15, the Continental Congress abolished the old governments of Pennsylvania and Maryland, thus exercising the sovereign power over the country, and transferring, by the authority of the Union, the legal relation of the citizens of its several parts from Great Britain to America. In this way it greatly enlarged the number of citizens and voters in Pennsylvania.

On the seventh of June, the motion for independence was made in Congress. On the eighth, it was debated. The ninth was the Sabbath. On the tenth, it was postponed for three weeks. On the eleventh, the form of the Declaration was ordered to be prepared, and the ballot was used to elect the Committee for this purpose. On the twelfth, a Con-

stitution for the continent was ordered to be framed, and also a plan of treaties with foreign powers.

It was in the same month that the council and assembly of New Hampshire unanimously voted in favor of declaring the Thirteen Colonies a free and independent State. Massachusetts and Rhode Island had already renounced allegiance to Great Britain. The rest of the colonies seemed to wait for the Congress to do it in behalf of the whole country.

Accordingly, on the first of July, the motion for independence came before the Committee of the whole House of Congress. It was supported with great eloquence by John Adams. It was opposed with equal ability by Dickinson of Pennsylvania. He said: "The erection of an independent empire on this continent is a phenomenon in the world. Its effects will be immense." "A sovereignty composed of several distinct bodies of men, not subject to established constitutions, and not combined together by confirmed articles of union, is such a sovereignty as has never appeared." He further opposed the motion on the ground that "the boundaries of the colonies ought to be fixed before the Declaration, and their respective rights mutually guaranteed." But the Committee sustained the motion by the votes of a large majority. All the delegates from South Carolina voted against it. So did a majority of the Pennsylvania delegates. Delaware was equally divided. New York did not vote at all.

The next day it came before Congress for the final

vote. An absent delegate from Delaware had returned to make that colony right. Two of the Pennsylvania delegates did not attend, and so that colony was also favorable. South Carolina now united with the rest. New York only declined to vote, and so Congress declared Independence, the Representatives from no colony dissenting. They declared it, not in the name of the several colonies, but "in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies." These are the very words of "the Representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled," when, in the evening of the fourth day of July, 1776, they adopted the form of words in which the Declaration should be made known to the world. The Declaration did not merely announce the existence of the new republic. It also established the National Government more firmly. The war was no longer to be maintained merely to resist the aggressions of Great Britain. The people were henceforth to be citizens of the new nation of freedom, for "the new republic, as it took its place among the powers of the world, proclaimed its faith in the truth and reality and unchangeableness of freedom, virtue and right." * The allegiance of the people was transferred in their name and by their authority, from one nation to another. Each man's rights were held sacred. The several subordinate colonies became acknowledged States, and managed their internal affairs as before. Being in the Union, and struggling together for the

* Bancroft, vol. viii., p. 472.

maintenance of the Declaration, they were independent of Great Britain but not of the United States. They were most profoundly dependent upon the new nation, for it had and used, according to its ability, the sovereign power of abolishing colonial governments under the British Crown, and also the sovereign powers of war, peace, treaties and commerce over all the territory of the Union. It never asked nor received these powers from the States as such. It seized them from Great Britain by its own strong hand, and held and retained them by eight years of successful war. It closed that war in the possession of them ; and by the treaty of peace, and in many other ways, it exercised the sovereign power over every man, woman and child in the United States.

So the Union came into being and gained the supremacy over the whole country. On the ninth of July, 1778, the Congress adopted Articles of Confederation to make the Union perpetual, and to define the respective powers of the National and State Governments. These remained in existence till the war had closed, and a few years of peace had shown the people that too much power had been assigned to the several States and too little to the nation. Hence the formation and adoption of our present National Constitution, whose first words are these : " We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and

our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The sixth article of the Constitution contains these words : " This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land ; and the judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any thing in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

" The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several States shall be bound, by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution." If any could have had a doubt about the national sovereignty before the adoption of this article, this should forever have settled it.

Thus, in the first stage of the nation, the Union was made ; thus, in the second stage, it was made perpetual ; and thus, in the third stage, it was made more perfect. Thus the powers that be were ordained of God, and every man in the nation is bound to obey them, unless he can show that to do so is to disobey God.

If the people of the South can show this, they have the revolutionary right to disown the authority of the Government. No authority is binding after it ceases to answer the end for which it was ordained. But those who take up the right of revolution must also incur the hazard of their enterprise. If their cause

is just, and they can make it successful, they deserve and will receive honor. If their cause is unjust, they must suffer reproach ; and if they fail, they must undergo whatever punishment the established government may inflict.

The insurgents against our National Government endeavor to strengthen their cause by placing it on other grounds than the right of revolution. This is their general course. Alexander H. Stephens, indeed, with a show at least of honesty, puts it squarely on the basis of revolution. He says, in substance, the spirit of the fathers of the republic is against slavery. The principles of the Declaration of Independence are against it. The general sentiment of the nation throughout its whole history has been against it. The prevailing sentiment of the nation and of Christendom to-day is against it. But the South has discovered that this sentiment is all wrong. Slavery is a blessing, to be perpetuated and extended. It is the rock on which our prosperity must forever rest, and it is right. We must, therefore, make a revolution, and found a new government whose corner-stone shall be slavery.

This course of Stephens is manly ; but it is not the way of the insurgents generally. The Church calls us to fasting and prayer, to-day, on account of a great war, which springs from the claim of sovereignty for each of the several States. The facts already adduced are evidence that there is no good foundation for this claim. Its falsity should be frequently set forth in another way.

When the Convention which framed our present Constitution began their work, with Washington at their head, to make a more perfect union, seeing it was perpetual before, there were two main plans proposed for the National Government. The New Jersey plan proposed that whenever needful the National Government should act on the State Governments and enforce its authority in this way. This plan was designed to favor and satisfy the smaller States. The Virginia plan proposed that the National Government should act directly upon the people, and, whenever needful, coerce every individual in the nation. This plan, for the most part, prevailed. Some concession was made to the smaller States, especially in giving them severally the same voice as the larger States in the national Senate. The possession of this power to enforce the national authority over all the people of every State make it needless to coerce any State, as such ; and the various insurrections at different times in Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and elsewhere, which the national forces have been employed in subduing, have been put down without any attempt or wish to coerce a State. The case is the same in the present insurrection.

The National Government, according to the Constitution, can use its high powers of sovereignty throughout the land over every individual, no matter what may be his relations or offices in any State. The exercise of sovereignty is indeed just what the Union has been showing ever since 1775 ; and the States

never have been and cannot be sovereign in the highest sense. The Constitution, treaties and laws of the nation are historically and rightfully supreme from Key West to Canada, no matter what may be the conduct or the constitution and laws of the several States. To the National Government every man owes that obedience which is due to the supreme power; and hence the National Government is bound to protect every loyal citizen in every State, no matter what combinations reject and defy its authority.

But the question arises: Why do the leaders of the people at the South claim State Sovereignty? They do not undertake to use it for an hour longer than they can make it answer a specific purpose. They merely vote a State out of the old Union in order to vote it into the new Confederacy. Why is this?

The answer is easy. State sovereignty—were there any such thing—exercised in this way, would give authority and justification to the intended revolution. The pretence of it will deceive many, and withdraw their allegiance from the old Union and transfer it to the new Confederacy. It is one grand pontoon launched and used to bridge the dark gulf of Treason, into which many dread to make the fatal plunge.

Now, should the further question be asked, Why do the leaders of the people at the South wish to make a revolution? the answer should be: They give many reasons; and their reasons, for the most part, we must accept as true, so far as they go. But many a man does not know all the motives of his conduct, and he

is not always ready to avow all he does know. It is no breach of charity to add a few which he does not wish to set forth ; for we do not see ourselves in every case as others see us.

To understand the motives for the revolution now undertaken, we must bear in mind that the South is unceasingly losing its relative strength in the Union. Its gain by the annexation of Texas and the Mexican war has been more than overcome by the discovery of mineral wealth in California. That discovery gave a spring to all Northern enterprise, and has in fact added two or three free States to the Union. Are they sovereign? The failure of the South in the Kansas adventure was even harder for the Southerners to bear. In spite of all their schemes, the North outgrows them. and grasps indeed the fruit of their own efforts. The county of Charleston is, I believe, the only one in the United States containing a population so large as the city of Charleston's, whose inhabitants absolutely decreased ten per cent. between the years 1850 and 1860. A hundred years more like the last ten years would reduce it to an abode of desolation. Now it is plain, no intelligent people can be content with such a history ; and the citizens there believe, that this loss is caused in great part by the national revenue laws and the want of direct trade between Southern ports and Europe. They also believe, that they could establish this direct trade very extensively, and gain many and great advantages, were their political connection with the Union done away. This is the full belief of

millions from Baltimore to Galveston, and they act accordingly.

Another class of persons at the South bear in mind that two National Governments require nearly twice as many officers as one—two Presidents, two Cabinets, two sets of Foreign Ministers, and many other officers of lower grades. In the North, the enterprize and activity of the best minds run in a thousand channels. In the South, the best half of the talent is given to politics and government. But how can it reach the highest places while the population of the North, already twice that of the South, is forever more relatively on the increase. Disunion opens a new way for ambition ; and not a few are eager to tread it, even at great risk of their lives.

Another reason why many claim State sovereignty and favor the revolution is this : the Union hampers them in their efforts to seize the territory of their neighbors further South. They would gladly dissolve their connection with the North in order to acquire possessions in the tropics.

Closely connected with these, and partly identical, is another class of disunionists, who desire a renewal of the slave trade. But they have no hope of renewing it legally in the Union, and hence they favor secession, that the flag of a Southern Confederacy may enable them to engage in it with less risk.

But the chief reason for the claim of State sovereignty and the desire for revolution through its exercise is one which has in fact produced several of

the reasons already assigned. This is the great change of opinion and feeling, in the course of our national history, in almost all parts of our country, on the subject of slavery. Many can remember when nearly the whole country deemed it the misfortune and disadvantage of the South. Few thought it either wrong or desirable in itself. Sixty years ago one-sixth of the members of the Church here were slaves ; and their owners never lost position nor regard in the Church or in the community, because they were slaveholders. Since that time there has arisen a general and stern judgment against the relation. But this is not all. A most intense and bitter feeling against those who maintain it has been created and fostered in many minds, often by such misrepresentations as would need only specific direction and popular belief in order to cause general hatred of any community on the face of the globe.

Thus the public mind has moved at the North. In the South, the movement has not been less in the opposite direction. Twenty years ago I heard the leading men of Southern Virginia groan beneath the burden which slavery had imposed upon that State, and congratulate New York on her happier lot in the possession of free white labor. But the time had then almost come when even intelligent Virginians ceased to regard the institution as an evil to the South. Gov. Wise, Prof. Bledsoe, Dr. Armstrong, and others of less ability, began to proclaim its justice and its goodness with eloquence and power. The faith in its worth for the South has long prevailed in South

Carolina, and thence it has spread abroad, so that Southern Virginia, for years past, has sent back no echo of the sentiments cherished on this subject by the great men whom that part of the country gave to the Union in the years of the Revolution.

At the present time, wherever the influence of New England prevails on the one side and the influence of South Carolina on the other, the people are two opposite parties in judgment and feeling, and the Cotton States are pretty thoroughly united in the purpose and effort to make them two nations in fact. All the Cotton States renounced their allegiance to the Union, and went into the rebellion in less than six weeks after South Carolina had led the way. Not only so, but they quickly formed a confederacy for war, and commenced that war in the basest treason against the United States.

There is another reason which impels some persons to support the war which the insurgents have begun and now wage against our country. This is the belief that the North will use the National Government to emancipate the slaves, and incite them to insurrection and massacre, thus overwhelming the whole South in ruin, and causing horrors which would make humanity sicken and faint away. A few Northern people have made threats to do all this, and not a few of our newspapers have sought to make credulous Southerners believe that many Northern people desire it.

There is one more reason which I would mention for the present effort to make a revolution. It is the ir-

reconcilable antagonism between democracy and despotism. For a long time after the establishment of our national independence, Benjamin Franklin was the President of a society for the abolition of slavery. In 1818, the General Assembly of the whole Presbyterian Church in the United States, both North and South, were unanimous for its abolition, not only in America, but throughout the world. It is not so now. The institution has so fostered despotism that for ten years past, in the Cotton States, personal violence would have been inflicted on any common man who had ventured in public to utter the sentiments of Washington, Jefferson and Franklin on this subject—the sentiments of the whole Presbyterian Church before the despotism of slavery had grown to be imperious and violent—so imperious and violent that it cannot endure rebuke for its wrongs. Thus the personal freedom of thought, speech and action which our Northern institutions produce is an offense to the South.

It is plain, therefore, that the reasons for the war which the insurgents have commenced and are now waging against the nation, are neither few nor feeble in the minds of many Southerners. We may call them unfounded, perverse, selfish and base. This does not make them powerless in urging forward the foes of the nation to strike for its disruption and the utter overthrow of its authority and power over half its territory—the half continent which belongs to one nation, one sovereignty, not to thirty and more.

Those who know best, or who should know best, as to the danger of the nation's destruction through the success of the rebellion, fear no such result. Its accomplishment would, in my judgment, be a calamity which no one can easily understand—a much greater calamity than a ten years' war and a debt of a thousand millions of dollars. My father freely left his young family for a season, nearly fifty years ago, to serve his country in arms. My grandfather and great-grandfather, in different campaigns of the Revolutionary War, faithfully fought for their country in the army of liberty. But small was the object for which those patriots of the Revolution so nobly fought in comparison with that for which we are summoned to battle. They contended for the liberty of three millions under a government imperfectly formed. We fight for the freedom of thirty millions under the best government that was ever formed. The question at issue is the fate of this great nation and its mighty influence upon the other nations and peoples of the earth. The stupendous importance of the matter in hand should make us grave and thoughtful, heroic and true. We should subdue our pride and arrogance and self-sufficiency. We should put away all bitterness and wrath and malice. We should penitently, humbly and earnestly implore God's favor and might for our country and cause in the terrible rebellion and war which we must subdue. We should be good men as well as loyal citizens. We should obey the powers that be, and do all we can to maintain the happy pro-

tection of the government over as many of its faithful citizens as possible in every part of the country.

There is no sufficient cause for revolution. Hence we should resist it everywhere and always. In every step of the war, the insurgents against the nation have taken the lead. They seized forts, arsenals, hospitals, mints, money, vessels and other property of the National Government. They were many weeks engaged in these acts of pillage and war, yet the President of the United States did not call for volunteers to defend the nation till after the President of the Confederacy had called upon all the world to fit out privateers to plunder the private property of our citizens. Urgent was the demand of force for self-defense to preserve not limbs only, but even life itself—the life of the nation. Magnificent was the answer of the loyal people to the call of the suffering republic. I know nothing grander in the political history of the world. It was a sublime rising of the people to defend the life of the nation, showing in the east, the centre and the west a general and noble loyalty to the Constitution and laws of the Union—the supreme law of the land. It was such an uprising as would naturally spring from the people's habitual regard for the law in these parts of the country. For the laws of the nation have been all along better observed and enforced at the North than at the South. Who does not know that the National Government suffered the freedom of speech and of the press to be greatly abridged at the South long ago? Has not the national mail been invaded there

again and again—hundreds of times—without redress? Good men have been repeatedly driven thence and greatly injured there for speaking, even in private, to their fellow citizens the religious convictions of millions of the American people. The Constitution says: “The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.” But this part of the supreme law has often been found a dead letter in the South. Persecution for opinion’s sake has been heavy there for many a year. The great body of the Northern people, while faithfully obeying even the hard parts of the supreme law, have been willing to bear these Southern outrages meekly—to compromise matters—to wink at the inactivity of the National Government in such cases. They would not for an hour have endured such acts of violence to American citizens in England or France as have grown to be common in the South. And now this lawless violence, turning not away indeed from faithful citizens there, has lifted itself to subvert the authority of the nation over a large part of its vast territory. Great multitudes have conspired, bound themselves by oath, and risen in arms for this purpose. Now, therefore, when bad men conspire to overturn the government, good men must combine to uphold it. Now we must reap the fruits of the general loyalty of our people in the years that are past; and with heart and hand bear our part in the support of the National and Constitutional Government of the country. And the Church calls us “in view of the turbulence and of the

menace of our times, the dread inauguration of civil war, and the prospect of its ravages of physical and moral desolation in our country, to acknowledge the agency and the just judgments of our God in all this, and to humble ourselves before Him with the prayer :
O Lord ! in wrath remember mercy ; spare Thy people, and restore peace in all our borders."

VII.

National Reasons for Holiness.

“ Help us, O Lord of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake.”—ASAPH.

PRAYER for help and deliverance is here joined with confession of sins and supplication for holiness.

The language of Asaph is therefore in keeping with the proclamation of the Chief Magistrate of our nation, calling us to confession and supplication to-day.*

It came, thousands of years ago, from the inspiration of God, that the Hebrew nation might first of all use it in a time of war and trouble; but we, also, may properly use it, in so far as our condition is the same as the relations and circumstances of the chosen people. And the Bible declares plainly enough, that God is the Ruler as well as the Maker of the whole world.

This is, indeed, openly acknowledged by the highest civil and military authorities of our nation, however much it may be disregarded by very many of our people. Our National Congress and Chief Magistrate

* Fast-day, Aug. 4, 1864.

freely own what the Holy Scriptures so clearly teach, that "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another"—Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. "He ruleth by His power forever; His eyes behold the nations"—Ps. lxvi. 7.

These comprehensive declarations assert, in the most general way, the sovereignty and government of God over all the earth. His authority and control are not confined to one people. They never were, even when, for special reasons, He chose to sustain a peculiar relation to the Hebrew tribes and nation. The Bible makes it sure that His judgments extend to the people of every land. The declarations of His Word are specific and clear, that the sufferings which men experience in this world are according to His direction. "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground"—Job v. 6. It is not one nation only that He has taught to own His hand. To the Hebrew, He said: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no"—Deut. viii. 2. To the chief ruler of Babylonia, He said: "They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the

Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"—Dan. iv. 25. You know the perfect fulfilment of these words, and how inspiration sketches the history of many nations, in order to show us that God's hand is among them. Egypt and Assyria, Nineveh and Tyre, and many nations of later days, are proofs and monuments of God's regard for righteousness and hatred of sin.

The proper study of history does not weaken the belief in a Divine Providence. "History," says Niebuhr, the great historian, "is of all kinds of knowledge the one which tends most decidedly to that belief." God's dealings towards the human race, whether in past or present times, clearly show us His control of it. For, as Leibnitz remarks, "God has the qualities of a good governor as well as of a great architect." And our conscience makes us believe, that He who created us with this faculty, must Himself love the virtue which it would lead us to love, and hate the sin for which it reproaches us. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things"—1 John iii. 20.

Man, it is true, may be so ignorant, or so mistaken, as to what is right and what is wrong, as verily to think that he serves God in the practice of the most outrageous wickedness. Saul's persecution of the early Christians is not a singular proceeding of this kind. Several of the Roman emperors, and perhaps most of those early persecutors, were thoroughly conscientious in their dealings with the worshippers of

Jesus. Inquisitors, torturers, slaveholders, suicides, and many other classes of persons whom we are wont, perhaps, to regard with abhorrence, have been just as conscientious as ourselves.

“Who can understand his errors?” How becoming to pray God, in the words and spirit of the Psalmist : “Cleanse thou me from secret faults”—Ps. xix. 12. Who can see himself as others see him? How proper it is to offer to-day the supplication of the Psalmist : “Purge away our sins for Thy name’s sake.”

Let us prayerfully consider, as the proper theme of our discourse on this occasion, that not sin, but *holiness is the condition of help and deliverance from God.*

Of course you are not unmindful of the scorn which a proposition of this kind ever excites in many a godless heart.

Forty-five years ago, there was cooped up, on a solitary rock in the Southern Atlantic, a poor, miserable, moody, petulant, sick man, about fifty years old, who had taught men to believe that Providence was always on the side of the most numerous battalions and the heaviest guns. But the last years of his eventful life afford all-sufficient proof that other elements than numerous battalions and heavy guns have great influence to determine the course of history. There are moral forces in the souls of men as well as physical forces in their muscles—a truth well displayed, for instance, in the rise of the Dutch Republic ; and high above every power of man and nature,

“O’er thrones and globes elate,”

there is the sovereign and holy God, who "loveth righteousness ; but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth"—Ps. xi. 5-7. And in His love and hatred there is a burning intensity, which corresponds to the infinite greatness and perfection of the Godhead. For He is wholly indifferent to right and wrong, and then, of course, all morals are a mere delusion, or "there is, in the wide universe, no wrath, as there is no love, that can be compared for intensity to that of Deity. They are measures of each other."* The glowing heat and the melting tenderness are alike infinite. There is no love if there is no aversion ; and this aversion is nothing at all, or it is all that the Bible means, and more than we can understand, in the fearful words—the wrath of God.

And as no American Christian is indifferent to the national and temporal bearings, relations, and effects of the rebellion and ruin, the war and the woes of our day and land, so no man is a true Christian who is not interested in their moral and religious influences—who does not trace their relations to the feelings and purposes of "the Governor among the nations," who has all power in heaven and earth. In all our present sufferings, the eye that is full of light sees the wrath of God against sin, and none but the Pharisee disclaims all share in the transgression, unless it be some Macbeth who exclaims :

"Thou canst not say I did it."

* Tayler Lewis' "Divine Human," chap. iii. p. 37.

The troubles and sorrows of the times are not the only proofs that we are a sinful people, and need to pray God to "purge away our sins." It required no special Divine illumination, many years ago, to foresee and foretell these days. To attest and exemplify this statement, I will not adduce such men as Thomas H. Benton, who, more than eight years since, closed his "Thirty Years' View," of the inside of the United States Senate ; and then, in the last lines of the book, and in words of solemn foreboding, declared his fearful apprehension of these days. There is another class of persons who have been wont to survey our country's future with solicitude. They are men who see that Christianity, not corruption, must sustain us, or we must perish. They do not consent, with the French King, who said : "After me, the deluge." The late Amos Lawrence was remarkable for honesty, insight, patriotism, and charity. His heart overflowed with goodness. His sympathies embraced all kinds and classes of sufferers, and from his ample means he bestowed abundant relief. He was not inclined to ill-nature and detraction. He was just the opposite, and sought to find and promote goodness everywhere. Yet so early as May, 1836, during a visit to Washington City, he wrote : "I have passed two hours in the Representatives' Hall and Senate Chamber to-day. I heard the usual sparring, and confess myself greatly interested in it. I could learn nothing of the merits of any of the questions ; but I had a preference, such as one feels in seeing two dogs fight, that one should

beat." "Some objects appear smaller by our getting nearer to them." On the 21st of August, in the same year, 1836, he wrote to his sister and alluded to her having recently shown him a mass of original letters from Washington, Hancock, Samuel Adams and various other revolutionary characters. He adds: "I hardly know when I have been more forcibly impressed with a plain truth than I was yesterday, while sitting alone on horseback, on the top of the redoubt on Dorchester Heights, and the considerations of the past, the present, and the future, were the subject of my thoughts, connecting the men of those days with the present, and the men of these days with the future. The evidence is irresistible, that there is a downhill tendency in the character of the people, which, in sixty years more, will make us more corrupt than any other enlightened nation, so young as ours, unless we are checked by adversity and suffering."*

We have lived to see, in less than half of sixty years from that day, the adversity and suffering come from the corruption, whether the check has come yet or not.

Our adversity and suffering urge us to pray God for help and deliverance. But we must confess and forsake our sins, in order to make our prayer effectual. When we cry, "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name, and deliver us," we must also add, "and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake."

The minister of God's Word is wont to persuade

"Diary and Correspondence," chap. xvii. pp. 138-140.

men to the practice of righteousness and godliness, and to urge many motives, in order to prevail with them.

We have been called together to-day by national authority ; and it is showing no more than due respect to the Congress and President of the United States—in their respective departments the highest national powers which God has ordained—to use those motives which possess a national character, while I urge you to comply with that condition, on which depends our help and deliverance from God. For it is righteousness and holiness, not iniquity and sin, that must be the condition of the Divine favor and strength to save us.

For a little while Napoleon may teach us that Providence is always on the side of the greater force ; but the clear, calm voice of history, uttering her words of truth through century after century, makes us sure, that the Ruler of the world loves virtue, as such, and hates vice, as such, so that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come”—1 Tim iv. 8.

There are, then, national reasons for rectitude and piety.

1. The first of these reasons to be now urged is the desirableness of suppressing the rebellion which has risen up and made war in our land.

It is desirable that you should do your part in suppressing this great wickedness and injury, and it is therefore desirable, and just as desirable, that you should forsake sin and transgression ; that you should

practice righteousness and religion ; that you should be virtuous and holy.

Let us consider, for a moment, the strength of this motive for godliness. Let us see how desirable it is, to suppress the rebellion which has begun and still continues this stupendous war and enormous wasting of life and treasure in our land.

(1.) The desirableness of the suppression is seen in the light of the unutterably wicked origin of the rebellion.

I have read at least the general history of the world with close attention ; but I can find no instance of a great war commenced so wickedly, in view of all the circumstances, as this, which the fell powers of treason and rebellion have begun, and still maintain, in our own country and time. It was in the secession convention of Georgia, as lately as the middle of January, 1861, that Alexander H. Stephens said : " We have always had the control of the General Government, and can yet if we remain in it, and are as united as we have ever been. We have had a majority of the Presidents chosen from the South, as well as the control and management of most of those chosen from the North. We have had sixty years of Southern Presidents to their twenty-four, thus controlling the Executive Department. So of the judges of the Supreme Court, we have had eighteen from the South, and but eleven from the North. Although nearly four fifths of the judicial business has arisen in the free States, yet a majority of the Court has always been

from the South. This we have required so as to guard against any interpretation of the Constitution unfavorable to us. In the Legislative branch of the Government, we have had twenty-four temporary Presidents of the Senate to their eleven. We have had twenty-three and they twelve Speakers of the House. While the majority of the Representatives, from their greater population, have always been from the North, yet we have so generally secured the Speaker, because he, to a greater extent, shapes and controls the legislation of the country.

“What right has the North assailed? What interest of the South has been invaded? What justice has been denied, and what claim founded in justice and right has been withheld?” “Name one governmental act of wrong deliberately and purposely done by the Government of Washington of which the South has a right to complain.” “For you to attempt to overthrow such a Government as this, under which we have lived for more than three-quarters of a century—in which we have gained our wealth, our standing as a nation, our domestic safety when the elements of peril are around us, with peace and tranquility accompanied with unbounded prosperity and rights unassailed—is the height of madness, folly and wickedness.”

These statements of Mr. Stephens set forth the facts and truth of history. But what was going on all around him at the very moment of their utterance? It is also the record of history that within a few weeks of the day he made them, either before or after, while the

whole country was under the flag of the National Government—while the United States' mail was serving every part of the land—while the authorities of the nation were as patient as lambs and as peaceful as doves, traitors rose up and forcibly seized one national fort, vessel, armory, arsenal, custom-house, hospital and mint after another, until over a territory of thousands of miles in extent, almost every fortification, every ship, every armory, every arsenal, every hospital, every courthouse, every custom house, every mint, every sub-treasury was plundered, and all the arms, ordinance, ammunition and treasure were turned against the very government and country to which they belonged. This is not all, nor half ; for the traitors openly rebelled against the Supreme Government of the country, cast off allegiance to it, defied its authority, assembled a Congress, adopted a Constitution, chose a President, began to raise armies, and organized a confederacy as a foreign and hostile power—and all this, too, before the Government of the United States even lifted a finger in its own defense to maintain its constitutional and rightful authority and supremacy over every part of the country and every one of the people, from ocean to ocean, and from the gulf to the lakes. These facts are known to all men ; and yet their most simple and truthful recital even now seems almost incredible. They show, that in all my readings of history there is no record of a rebellion so wicked as this—no record of a great war against a well-established Government so unprovoked and atrocious as the terrible conflict

which the rebellion made and tenaciously maintains. Not to suppress such a rebellion is to wrong the nation not only, but also to inflict a serious injury upon the whole civilized world. Our land mourns, and civilization falters in her progress over the earth through want of respect and obedience to legal authority in the family, in the Church, and in the nation. Give success to rebellion on such grounds as we see here, and civilization will stagger as well as falter. In the remotest parts of the earth, and in every land on which she has planted her foot, she lifts up her hands and prays you to subdue and suppress this pernicious and atrocious rebellion. Humanity joins in her prayer ; and no words can express—no representations set forth—the desirableness of the end which they seek ; and the unspeakable desirableness of the extermination of this rebellion is the strength of the motive now urged upon you, in favor of righteousness and godliness, in all your ways, that the Almighty may give you help and deliverance.

(2.) The course and the effects of the rebellion also cause us to feel the desirableness of its suppression. Its course is marked with fear, want, misery, bereavement, fire and blood. It has grown despotic and cruel, as its tyrannic power has been lessened and its usurped territory has been contracted. It now rules with a rod of iron over all its bloody hand can grasp and hold. It spares neither beardless boys nor hoary heads, and drives even the sick and feeble from destitute homes to bloody fields. Should it long endure,

and its influence continue to stream forth over the earth, its falsehoods and corruption will spread a fatal taint through a thousand streams which are now healthful, and open a thousand poisonous fountains which have never yet begun to flow. It will do more and worse than shed the blood of millions, for it will contaminate the souls of millions upon millions of men. Its effects will become widespread, pervading, pestiferous and hurtful, in ten thousand ways and forms, to liberty, manliness, education, and many of the brightest features of civilization.

It is unspeakably desirable that such a rebellion should be ground to powder, burned with fire, and its very ashes cast into the depth of the sea. It is therefore in the same measure desirable that we should repent of sin, turn away from all wrong doing, practice the virtues of piety and godliness, possess and cherish the graces of the Christian character, deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God in the faith and order of the Gospel. On this condition we may properly pray and expect the help and deliverance of the God of salvation.

2. The worth of this country is another national motive which urges us to fulfill the conditions of acceptable prayer; and the Bible teaches me, that "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

(1.) The worth of the country may well be viewed in two aspects. The first is its worth to its own people. All the chief points in our past history are valuable to us: the discovery of this continent; the coloni-

zation of the various parts of our country ; the character of the colonists so unlike each other in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Georgia and Florida ; the course of European changes which greatly influenced the colonies, and especially the relations of France and Great Britain to one another ; the confederation of the United Colonies of New England ; the course of the British Government respecting colonial affairs before the Revolution ; the immediate causes of that great undertaking ; the conduct and issue of the war ; the peculiar fitness of the more prominent men for the demands of those times ; the willingness of the people of all the States to make the compromises of the Constitution ; the acquisitions of territory and of population under the government of the Constitution ; the wonderful prevalence of peace to so great a degree with foreign nations ; the amazing development of the sources of national and personal wealth ; the unusual extension of educational and religious institutions ; the progress of science and literature ; the unparalleled migration of foreigners to our shores ; the increase of all national interests ; the large measure of personal freedom enjoyed by the citizens ; and the unprecedented lightness of the burdens of government—all these are elements in our history which make our country exceedingly valuable to our people at home. It is seventy-five years, five months and a day since the National Government was re-organized under the Constitution ; and in that time the population of the country has so increased that we

now have as many as we had then, and tenfold more besides. Even in these years of war, the population of the loyal part of the country is doubtless increasing faster, that is, at a greater per cent., than in any other great nation of the globe. The world has never seen as many people under one government so happy as the citizens of this country have been throughout nearly the whole period of our constitutional history. Four years ago our commerce was greater than any other nation's, and promises to be so again as soon as the rebellion is suppressed, and its incendiaries are driven away from the burning of peaceful merchantmen. We have nearly half the railroads of the world, and within the last two years, in addition to many others which have been made, European capital has built a broad gauge railroad from the State of New York to the remotest corner of Ohio, so that there is now a continuous route of broad gauge, as well as narrow gauge road, from New York City to St. Louis. Our telegraphic system, the most wonderful in the world, is now on its way to Asia, and crossing our continent on a new line faster than ever before, bringing Nevada, Idaho and other territories into hourly communication with all the chief points of our country. Now, shall we go on erecting telegraphs, constructing railroads, working mines, subduing forests, bridging rivers, ploughing prairies, raising harvests, building cities, increasing wealth, establishing homes, raising families and enjoying happiness as citizens of a great nation or not? In other words, shall rebellion break the country

to fragments and ruin it, or not? Is not our country, with all its past history, worth something to its own citizens? Will not its preservation and its prosperity in the future, like its progress in the past, be worth something to our children?

More than three years since, on such an occasion as this. I made the remark that the success of the rebellion and the disruption of the nation, its disorganization into restless and clashing fragments, and the overthrow of its power over half its territory would be, in my judgment, a calamity which no one could easily describe—a much greater calamity than a ten years' war and a debt of a thousand millions of dollars. For then I knew human depravity well enough, especially in military affairs, to have no thought of a short war. Three years of war, and a debt of twice a thousand million dollars have shown me no grounds to change my judgment. I deem this country worth much to its citizens. Dark would be the day that should see it broken into fragments. And all its worth in its unity, its prosperity and its perpetuity, is a motive urging us to such a life of righteousness and godliness; such a reverence of the Deity; such a sanctification of the Lord's Day; such a maintenance of His worship; such devotion to His kingdom, which is greater, higher and better than even the nation, that we may secure the favor and deliverance of the Almighty. And who can measure the worth of the nation to its own citizens only?

(2.) But it is worth much to many millions else-

where. For the question now on trial in this country as to the oneness and preservation of the nation, is a question which concerns very many more than the present inhabitants of America. It does not belong to us and our posterity only. It also deeply touches the welfare of large numbers in Europe and Asia and Africa. The world contains no other region so well fitted for an immense commonwealth of freemen as our own country. The common people of some parts of Europe and Asia begin to see this very plainly. Our stupendous war does not hinder them from crossing the Atlantic this very year at the rate of nearly a thousand a day. Each week brings as many as our whole town of Southold contains. They see that our country has a thousand attractions. It has every desirable diversity of climate. It has high and rich mountains, deep and broad lakes, long and branching rivers, useful and precious minerals, and valleys and prairies surpassing their thought. Nor are these its only charms. It is even now unceasingly acting upon the governments and social institutions of Europe through ten thousand channels of commercial, political and familiar influence. The oppressive privileged classes of the old world never feared and hated us more intensely than they do this hour. For even now familiar letters go in shoals and swarms across the sea filled with the spirit of this new world, and vital with the most vigorous hope, bearing more than golden treasures to the old country, and reaching almost every hamlet of Germany and every hovel of Ireland. These

letters disclose social and political privileges, as well as material, pecuniary and sumptuary advantages which may be enjoyed here beyond the possession and reach of persons of the same classes in any other part of the globe. The immense multitudes and millions of Europe abate not their love for this country. The regal and lordly classes, with many of the commercial tribes, never cease to fear and hate it; and all who are greatly under the control of these influential classes seem to be in sympathy with them. But for the great mass of the European people this country has a priceless worth. Hence the widest love for our fellowmen, both at home and abroad, as well as the most intense desire for our own welfare, impels us to prize our country, and to strive for its preservation. All that our country is worth to the great masses of population in other lands, is an argument for virtue and piety on our part, that the Most High may hear us while we cry: "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake."

There is now to be presented in a few words just one most weighty consideration, which will make a proper conclusion to the course of thought and argument that we have hitherto pursued. The consideration is this: the glory of God is the chief end of our history, and of our very existence, whether as a nation or as individuals. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever"—Rom. xi. 36. Hence the glory of God is the very

best ground for our supplications. This is the highest reason which we can urge in our prayers. It is the most comprehensive and effective argument which we can use in our entreaties before the mercy-seat.

Now it is plain that the life of righteousness and godliness, for which I have been pleading, is the one thing needful to secure our harmony with God—the very condition of our seeking His glory as our chief end. Let your life be in a high degree holy, and you will ever be ready to employ the grand, comprehensive argument used in my text, as a plea for the divine favor and aid.

God's glory is the motive which moves, directs and controls Almighty power with infinite wisdom in earth and heaven. How ineffably desirable, and unceasingly desirable, therefore, that we should so live as to make our wishes, our aims and our prayers correspond with the feelings and purposes of the Deity. Let every man for himself maintain a high Christian character, walking carefully and prayerfully in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, fulfilling to the best of the ability which God gives him, all his duties to himself, to his fellowmen, and to his Maker, Redeemer and Sanctifier, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Then, with sure expectation of the divine favor, may we all pray in our trouble: "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake."

VIII.

The Sum of the Gospel.

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—PAUL.

EVERY artist, orator and soldier reveals himself in his method. "The style is the man." But a subject may be treated in either of two ways—the logical or the rhetorical. The philosopher pursues the first; the orator the second. Investigation, analysis, mark the former; synthesis, persuasion, the latter. The one seeks the intellect; the other aims through the intellect to move the sensibilities and the will.

Paul often combines these two methods, or makes them identical—as in the above quotation—and thus shows his philosophic genius and his oratorical power.

The grace of God that pertains to the salvation of all men is another name for the Gospel, the divine plan of redemption through Jesus Christ, comprising all its doctrines, precepts, promises and privileges—all the spiritual gifts, virtues and benefits which it confers on

man and causes him to experience in the pardon of sin and admission to the divine kingdom.

It is, then, the sum of the Gospel, in its requirements, motives and aims, that the philosophic orator presents in this quotation, where he brings into one view the duties which the Gospel enjoins, the motives which it offers, and the ends which it seeks.

I. The duties are twofold—negative and positive.

1. The negative duties are enjoined in two specifications which require us to deny :

(1.) Ungodliness.

(2.) Worldly lusts.

These specifications, though less comprehensive severally than the prohibitions of the Gospel, are nevertheless exceeding broad.

(1.) For the first specification of negative duty forbids atheism, whether theoretical or practical.

It is possible to deny the existence of God—to refuse all acknowledgment of His Personal Being and His natural and moral attributes. There is in these days a strong tendency of speculative thought towards atheism and pantheism. There is no place of rest for the soul between evangelical Christianity, with its divine Redeemer incarnate, the God-Man Mediator, and the blankest and blackest atheism or the most subtle and deceptive pantheism. The rock that topples from the highest point of the mountain rushes down the steep side until it plunges into the gulf at the base and is lost to view in the restless waves. So the ever active spirit can find no point of repose in all its down-

ward course from faith in Immanuel, until it sinks in the dark depths of atheism ; and even there the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, though the greater density of the medium makes the agitation less visible and less violent.

Yet the position of theoretical atheism is peculiarly absurd ; for the atheist contradicts the general belief, and says there is no God. He says this because he has never seen, heard nor felt God. But has he lived forever ? has he been eternally present everywhere throughout the universe ? How does he know there are no manifestations of Deity, this very moment, in some point of the immensity of space, sufficient to convince any rational mind of the existence of God ? There may be some person in the universe whom the atheist does not know, and that person may be God. If the atheist is not the chief person, and knows not who is, then that chief person may be God. If the atheist cannot point out the cause of everything in existence, there may be a great First Cause. If he knows not everything ever done in the universe, something may be the work of a God. In a word, unless he knows all things, and has been always present in all places, that is, unless he is himself a God, the atheist cannot know that there is no God. There was a human footprint to be found on Crusoe's island ; and there may be, in some part of the universe, a footprint of the Creator which the atheist has not yet discovered. But he must certainly know that there is no God, or his atheism is equally absurd and wicked. This ab-

surdity and wickedness the Gospel teaches us to deny. It forbids this violation of our own nature, which requires us to pass beyond a series of successive and dependent causes and effects, and to acknowledge the existence of One who has in Himself no marks of another's design—One whom our own conscience owns as its sovereign Judge, even as it is the office of conscience to be supreme over all the other powers of the soul—One who is so uncreate and perfect, that man is only His dim and imperfect image, and therefore the demonstration of the infinite and parental source of all light and life.

The Gospel also forbids ungodliness in the form of practical atheism. This sometimes appears in connection with an open denial of the Divine Existence. Even more remarkably than the decaying ages of ancient Greece and Rome, the close of the last century in France disclosed this monstrous phenomenon. The most attractive writers of the period in that country taught the people to reject the very first principles of religion, and to believe that there is no such thing as mind or morals—nothing higher than the material universe. Matter and its laws were held to be the only objects of science, and the existence of God was treated as the delusion of ignorant and credulous ages. This atheistic doctrine even now has not run its full course; but it reached its height and produced its proper fruits in greatest abundance in the Reign of Terror. Atheism was then, for the first time on a broad field, regularly put into practice. The

Sabbath was done away ; churches were turned into warehouses ; all acts of religious homage to the true God were disparaged ; Reason was enthroned, with heathen rites, in the person of a vile woman, as the object of national worship ; and death was pronounced an eternal sleep.

But it was soon evident that practical atheism would destroy a nation as surely as it ruins the soul of an individual. The experiment was made on a grand scale ; and the result was most disastrous. The people soon rejected the impious and pernicious system ; and laws had to be re-enacted acknowledging the existence of God and the immortality of man.

But there is another form in which atheism still appears in practice. It is not systematic and national, nor even based upon the open and public denial of the existence of God. But there are men whose personal action utterly disregards Him. They proceed in their daily course as though there were no God. They render Him no homage and worship ; they do not pray to Him ; they give no thanks for His benefits ; they never supplicate His mercy, nor take one step with the special purpose of showing forth His praise. In a word, they live among their fellowmen as though His favor and His displeasure were alike unworthy of thought. They neither do nor forbear to do anything on the sole ground of religion. They take the same position, as to God's existence, which many students of His works assume towards His word. The one class ignore His being ; the other His Bible. An at-

tentive observation of modern society perceives an abundance of this tendency to atheism in not a few scientific men, and this practical atheism in large numbers of irreligious people. But the Gospel is against all ungodliness. It inculcates, in all the relations of life, what Milton maintains in civil relations, namely : "That to govern well, is to train up a nation in true wisdom and virtue, and that which springs from thence, magnanimity (take heed of that), and that which is our beginning, regeneration, and happiest end, likeness to God, which in one word we call godliness." *

(2.) There is another specification of the negative duties which the Gospel requires. It teaches us to deny worldly lusts. It forbids us to make our appetites and passions the end of our being and the rule of our conduct. There are men who mind earthly things, who glory in shame, whose god is their belly, and whose end is destruction. They say : "Let us eat and drink ; for to-morrow we die." Their pretense of harmony is the release of the lower propensities from the control of the higher powers. They would endanger the permanence of the marriage relation and expose all the best interests of the family to the caprice of sensual desires. They would not enthrone conscience, but enjoy worldly pleasure ; and so they maintain the rectitude of every course in which they delight. Voluptuousness, not virtue, is their great good. The pleasures which they seek may be gross or elegant ; but their highest aspira-

tion is the consummate gratification of merely natural and worldly desires.

Against these immoral theories and all their practical applications, the Gospel utters a voice of condemnation. It enlightens our moral powers and requires us to act conscientiously in all our ways, for the teachings of the Gospel are divine.

2. The word of God enjoins those positive duties which spring from our three great relations in life, namely :

- (1.) Duties to ourselves.
- (2.) Duties to our fellowmen.
- (3.) Duties to our Creator.

In each of these relations, the duties of every man demand specific attention and thorough fulfillment.

(1.) We must live soberly ; and this word, which the apostle uses to denote our duties to ourselves, is very comprehensive, especially in the original. One element of the compound means the respiratory muscle in the very centre of the physical system—a kind of synecdoche for all the vital parts. This large use of the term in its proper sense well corresponds with its metaphorical signification, which embraces all the passions and affections of the soul—as love and hate, joy and grief, fear and courage—as well as all the intellectual and voluntary powers—as thought and understanding, choice and will. The other element of the compound embraces in its meaning all that pertains to the soundness, health, development and full perfection of our physical and mental system. The Gospel, there-

fore, requires us so to exercise, unfold, strengthen and use both our bodies and our minds as to make them most efficient for our own highest welfare. To this end we must be temperate in the gratification of our appetites and passions ; industrious in the employment of our time and opportunities ; studious in the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom ; earnest in the attainment of virtue and piety ; and diligent in the performance of all our duties to ourselves so as to derive the greatest advantage from all our physical and mental powers. Thus our aim must be to possess and use continually, and to the utmost, a sound mind in a sound body. We must accomplish more than the capture of a city ; for we must rule the heart. We must subdue every evil propensity of our nature ; restrain every unholy affection and every lawless passion ; reject every injurious thought, and change every unprofitable habit. In fine, we are to fit our bodies and our souls, according to our several abilities, to promote the cause of righteousness in a world of transgression.

(2.) For the positive duties which the Gospel inculcates include our duties to our fellowmen. We must live righteously. This involves the proper internal principle and the commensurate outward action. We must, therefore, love our neighbors as ourselves, and do to others as we would that they should do to us.

It is our duty, for instance, to use our property so as to do no injury to the possessions of others. These possessions may be property, liberty, reputation or character. Our fellowmen have a right to all these

valuable possessions, which promote human welfare and happiness. And if we use our property in such a way as to injure and waste our neighbor's possessions, then capital cannot increase; agriculture, arts and commerce cannot flourish, nor virtue and religion prosper. Let property be thus put to abuse and waste, and our race must almost perish, or pine in wretchedness, according to the degree of the perversion of God's bounty. In these circumstances, human progress ceases, and the only change is degradation.

But when all live righteously, wealth accumulates, arts prosper, society advances and population grows. In the same way, we must use our liberty and our reputation, as well as every other advantage which we possess, to promote the prosperity and the welfare of our fellowmen. Every man is bound to use his own powers of mind and body, and all his other possessions, within such limits as not to assail the rights of others; but, on the other hand, to increase their prosperity and comfort according to his ability. The Gospel, indeed, urges the whole Christian duty at this point in these few words: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

(3.) For the household of faith are not unmindful that the positive duties which the Gospel enjoins, are comprehensive enough to embrace our duties to God. Our relations to Him are more momentous than all others; and we must live godly. He upholds us and every other creature that can promote our welfare and

contribute to our comfort. He imparts to all objects whatever power they possess to minister to our wants and to make us good and happy. We cannot understand how thoroughly we depend upon Him for our life and all our enjoyments. And this is the case while our goodness cannot extend to Him. He has every perfection which we can imagine, and perhaps many attributes which our minds have never even thought; for who by searching can find out God? He is the inexhaustible source of all power, truth, beauty, and goodness in the universe. He confers upon us every moment benefactions without measure. Hence it is plain, that we are under the strongest possible obligations to use all our powers and possessions in the way, and for the end, which He requires. Our will should conform entirely to His will. We should worship Him in all sincerity with all our hearts; and we should perform all our duties to our fellowmen in view of the fact that they are His offspring, who must be loved for His sake. Hence a slight consideration of our relations to Him discloses the reasonableness of the Gospel's requirement, that we should love and obey Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. We have no release, or furlough, from this service—no compensation for any failure in duty at this point. We can make no one act supply the deficiency of any other. The sin which our consciences charge upon us must seek its expiation in some one besides ourselves. We cannot atone for it, even though our lives be henceforth perfectly godly.

Hence the godliness which the Gospel requires includes the performance of those duties that spring from our relation to God as our Redeemer. Penitence for our past failures, therefore, is not the whole of the Gospel's requirements in respect to them. We must accept the provisions graciously made to remedy our defections from duty. We must show gratitude for the Divine mercy, and comply with the conditions appointed for our recovery. It is our duty to participate in the Redeemer's movement to restore the world from its apostate and godless condition to the worship and service of Immanuel, and so hasten the coming of that day which will reveal His glory among men without a cloud. The glories of that day are one of the great motives of the Gospel.

II. There are two motives which we would specially consider—not negative and positive, like the duties—but those which spring, the one from the future, the other from the past.

1. The blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is a mighty motive for the performance of the duties which the Gospel enjoins. Supremely august and sublime is the expectation of the Ruler of the universe appearing in His glory to judge all the human race. Can there be a considerate mind which it moves not to the profoundest depths? The knowledge that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and receive a welcome to His glory forever, or a sentence of eternal banishment from His presence, when He shall come

in the glory of His Father with all the holy angels, this knowledge affords an urgent motive for obedience to the requirements of the Gospel. It appeals to the very first principles of the soul. The expectation of the omniscient Judge rouses the memory and the conscience in respect to the feelings, thoughts, purposes, words, and actions of the past, which will then come into review and receive their changeless sentence. The desire of reputation kindles with the thought of an intelligent universe standing in the presence of the all-beholding God, who will judge every man in all the countless throng according to his work. The destiny of the soul forever, it is plain, will soon be pronounced ; and immortal felicity and eternal bliss, or everlasting wretchedness and endless woe, are felt to be thenceforth the experience of every man. In this view, it is manifest, that the performance of duty secures unspeakable advantages ; for the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is in the hearts of His people more than the assurance of an immortal crown of glory, honor, life. Even now, in their perplexity, He speaks comfort to them, and says : " Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." This animates us with a prospective advantage

ineffably desirable. If the Gospel promised no good in the future, and inspired no hope of substantial gain, we might feel the want of sufficient motive for intense activity and earnestness. But there is a promise of an inheritance, a home, an honor beyond all thought. What are the emotions which fill the heart of a man, long absent from his native land and his dearest kindred, at the very moment when his homeward voyage first discloses, overlooking the sea, at the entrance to the port, the dwelling which marks the spot most attractive on earth, because it is the home of his best affections and the abode of a household more dear to him than life? Can language reveal the intense longing of his soul? How blessed the hope of that reality which must remain for an hour the mere anticipation of the heart! And is not the expectation of that reality an incentive on his way towards it? So the Gospel presents an attraction in the future, far surpassing the blessedness of any home on earth, to incite us in the performance of those duties which are the way to most delightful mansions in the Father's house. In due season, the One altogether lovely will come forth to meet us, and welcome us to all the lovely and holy there. He will not fail to receive us with gladness; for He has already given Himself for us.

2. The work of redemption, which he has accomplished in the past, is the pledge, and more than the pledge, of the rewards which he will bestow at the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ. If the great motive in the future grasps the

first principles of our nature, and attracts us with the force of the highest interests of the soul—if it rouses the memory and the conscience, awakens solicitude for personal safety and efforts for eternal happiness—if it inflames the desire for reputation, and quickens the sense of responsibility—there is another motive of the Gospel which makes the most irresistible appeal to the tenderest sensibilities of our nature. It has about it all the impressiveness and solemnity of the most awful tragedy, and all the pathetic influence of gentle and beneficent innocence persecuted even unto death. We have seen millions of people throughout our wide country—across the whole continent from ocean to ocean—as soon as the revolving earth brought to each the meridian hour—bow down in grief and mourning, because wicked assassins had put to death the civil and military chief of the nation. But the Ruler and Redeemer of the world has also suffered unto death. By wicked hands He has been crucified and slain. He did not hesitate, for our good, to expose himself to this danger, and to experience this destiny. He did not rise from the depths of obscurity to end His life in a blaze of glory for our sake. He left the glory of heaven—the inapproachable glory which blazed around Him before the light of creation dawned—and from that glory He came down to walk on earth in a lowly way, and to die in agony and shame, that He might rescue us from eternal woe, and fit us to enjoy forever the privileges and the blessedness of the Heavenly Commonwealth.

Thus the Gospel presents to us a transaction accomplished for our salvation so incomparable and stupendous, that the sun in the heavens could not behold it. "And so terrible was the sight" that it caused the earth to shudder and quake with the horror of great darkness ; for in that marvelous and miraculous scene the supernatural was most intensely natural. Thus the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.

In the very spirit of His redemptive works there is a powerful element which enters into this irresistible motive of the Gospel. Even in the last stages of His agony He overlooks the selfishness of the Pharisees, the treachery of Judas, the unfaithfulness of Peter, the cowardice of other apostles, the cruelty of His accusers, the injustice of His judges, the malice of His persecutors, the shame of His cross, the painfulness of His death. His eye beholds the overwhelming flood of wrath which the iniquity of the people would soon bring upon them. His previous concern for them is not enough. It does not satisfy His Divine compassion, that he had already said, with all the eloquence of the Saviour, in tears : "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Even while the cross and the cruelty laid upon him caused a great company of those who saw Him suffer to beat their breasts and lament Him, He was less ready to heed His own pain than to condole with them ; and He said : "Weep not for me ; but weep for yourselves

and for your children." This Divine tenderness failed not in the end. While wicked hands shed His blood, in the anguish and ignominy which He suffered, His infinite grace enabled him to intercede for them, and He prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

It was in this spirit that He gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, in principle, practice, and effect; to free us from the dominion of sin; to open a way through His own death whereby pardon could come to us for all our transgressions, and the Divine mercy could pacify our consciences for evermore. In this spirit, He shed His life-blood, to withdraw us from the strife of evil and discordant passions; to throw from our souls the burden of conscious guilt; and to save us from the companionship of the sinful and the servitude of Satan. Thus He died that we might not suffer banishment from the presence of God and the glory of His power, nor lose all communion with holy angels and fellowship with spirits of just men made perfect forever. Thus He died to redeem us from all that iniquity which would abandon us to all the malignity of sin and all the achievements of wickedness; which would finally make all our activity hurtful to ourselves, injurious to others, and disobedient to God; which would at length turn all our bodily powers into engines of torture most exquisite and intense; which would convert all the faculties and susceptibilities of our souls into the most perfect instruments of torment.

In a word, to redeem us from all iniquity, the sources of all evil that would overwhelm us in unutterable woe, the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself to the death of the Cross. And the heart which does not melt and move beneath the power of this Divine love and grace, we may be sure will never melt even in the fires of that lake which burneth for evermore.

III. Let us, then, rapidly glance at the end which the Gospel seeks, through the power of its supreme motives, and the fulfillment of its indispensable duties. Is it not plainly the utmost purity of heart and beneficence of action? The one often measures the other; for holiness is an irrepressible incitement to good works, and benevolent activity powerfully reacts upon the principle of spiritual life in the soul, and greatly advances progressive sanctification, and the growth of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

We must deny ungodliness and worldly lust, because the very end for which the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself was to redeem us from all iniquity. We must live soberly, righteously, and godly, because He gave Himself to purify unto Himself a peculiar people. He sought our purification as well as our pardon. His name is Jesus, because He saves His people from their sins. He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might cleanse it from every defilement and present it faultless before His glory with exceeding joy.

This is the peculiarity which the Gospel calls us to attain. We must become Christlike in character as well as in action. We must be changed into His image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. The vital branch must share the life and nature of the vine. Thus will its fruits be the same in kind ; for whoever is peculiar for his Christlike purity is also zealous of good works. He says with Saul : " This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He does not imagine that his redemption from the bondage of sin calls him to a life of idleness, but to the most diligent service. He thinks he must show the energy of racers and wrestlers who contend for a prize. Indeed, the soldier who fights for victory is the model and measure of that intensity of effort which the holy Christian manifests in his zeal for good works. He who beats the air only does not fight the good fight of faith. In fine, there is no peculiarity of the Gospel more characteristic than its determination to make all who receive it efficient in Christian practices. How impressively our Lord closes the discourse which is the key-note of His religion ! " Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand ; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell ; and great was the fall of it." Is it not plain enough, that the very end of the Gospel is to make men thoroughly pure in principle and zealous in beneficent action ? Let us therefore hear and do the sayings of Jesus.

IX.

The Gift of God.

“He does not direct us to take refuge in works, but confines our thoughts entirely to His mercy. For what does He teach us by the apostle? ‘The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Why does He not oppose righteousness to sin, as well as life to death? Why does He not make righteousness the cause of life, as well as sin the cause of death? For then the antithesis would have been complete, whereas by this variation it is partly destroyed. But the apostle intended by this comparison to express a certain truth—that death is due to the demerits of men, and that life proceeds solely from the mercy of God.”—JOHN CALVIN.

ETHERNAL life is the gift of God; and on this ground men often decline it. We do not wish to be an object of charity; and we are reluctant to be put under obligations.

Moreover, we see that the whole custom of giving and receiving gifts is a very delicate one, in which the good and the evil mingle freely. It is not easy to adjust its workings to those obligations of duty which moralists inculcate under the law of reciprocity, that is, our Lord’s rule of doing to others as we would that they should do to us.

Thousands of wise and skillful teachers have taught in our colleges and higher seminaries of learning; and one of the wisest and best of them, namely MARY

LYON, even taught her pupils to avoid the habit of giving and receiving presents. She supported her advice on this point with many and weighty reasons ; and these reasons were not mainly based on any peculiar relations, circumstances or prospects of her pupils. They rested for the most part on those great principles of prudence, equity and justice, which are the foundation of every stable and symmetrical character. She saw the tendency and temptation to sacrifice justice and right in order to gratify friendship and affection ; and she sought to guard against this wrong. She knew that there is many a time a strong inclination to incur expenses which good economy and Christian principle cannot approve and sanction. And she well understood that the acceptance of gifts, for which no equivalent is rendered to any one, has a powerful tendency to foster selfishness and sinful indulgence, and to undermine all stability and strength of character. The virtue of Lord Bacon could not endure those "gentle rewards" which Hugh Latimer would "call by their Christian name, bribes."

The reasons against the practice end not here. There are many more which are highly important, especially as to some features of the practice. For we all know the power of a gift in many a case to blind the mind and pervert the judgment. The understanding and the affections act and react upon each other. The heart and the head—who can measure the closeness of their connection ? A dry light is not always the most powerful.

"For when the heart goes before like a lamp and illumines
the pathway,
Many things are made clear which else lie hidden in
darkness."

To a spectator, the chief attraction in the proceedings of a court of justice may be the manifestation of the power of feeling, under the excitement of interest, to warp men's views of truth and justice. Personal advantages and strong affections cause men to observe minutely and carefully, and remember tenaciously all those relations and circumstances which are thought to be favorable to themselves, and to neglect or undervalue those aspects of the case which oppose their interests and feelings.

This influence of the sensibilities upon the intellect—the affections upon the judgment—causes the Word of God to give us many warnings in respect to giving and accepting gifts. Thus once and again it says : "Thou shalt take no gift ; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous"—Ex. xxiii. 8 : Deut. xvi. 19. And so it early passed into a proverb that "a wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment." Kindred to this are the sayings of the wise, that "a gift destroyeth the heart ;" "but he that hateth gifts shall live"—Prov. xvii. 23 : Eccl. vii. 7 : Prov. xv. 27. Why these declarations should be made we may see in other proverbs and maxims of God's Word, where we read : "He that receiveth gifts overthroweth judgment ;" "and every man is a friend to him that giveth

gifts"—Prov. xxix. 4: xix. 6. Doubtless it was in view of these principles and declarations of justice and wisdom, that the President of the United States, a month after the assassination of his predecessor, declined to accept the gift of a carriage and span of horses offered to him by certain merchants of New York.

There is also another aspect of this matter of gifts, which is best set forth in the teachings of our Lord. We may not forget how impressively He taught that gifts, even for religious uses, may be an offense to God, who desires mercy more than sacrifice—who prefers the holy obedience of the heart to the mere offering of the hands. He clearly teaches that no son can rightfully devote the property which he should use to support his aged and needy parents. He may a thousand times declare it to be *corban* or *tabu*; but God will not accept as a gift or sacrifice that which he should use to honor his father and mother in the supply of their wants.

Gifts may indeed be made for religious purposes, as well as for others, whenever they are made lawfully and justly. They should be made in this way. Our Lord himself commended not only Mary's gift of her alabaster box of spikenard, very precious; but also the gift of even a poor widow, who gave away all her living. And to His own disciples He said: "Freely ye have received; freely give." His whole system of religion is a scheme of beneficence. His Church is in part a great Missionary Society to confer spiritual

blessings upon as many people as possible. Each particular church is a local organization to promote all the benign influences of Christianity in its own neighborhood.

But all this does not weaken the duty of being just before we are generous ; and the obligation still binds us to make return, according to our ability, for all that we receive from God or man.

These considerations, and others like them, had great weight with me for many years, and made me shrink from accepting gifts. I felt, as I feel, the obligation to make return, according to my ability, for all my receipts ; and I dreaded the burden of debt—the cords and bands of unpaid obligations.

But in later years I have taken a better view of the law of reciprocity which binds us to do to others as we would that they should do to us. It is no less plain that we are to do our utmost to give an equivalent for all that we receive from our fellowmen individually, and from society around us ; but the law of reciprocity now seems to forbid our reluctance to receive favors from any who may justly confer them. On the contrary, it seems to require us to lay ourselves open to the kindnesses and benefactions of our fellowmen, and gratefully to accept their gifts, whenever they are not offered for illegal and base purposes. To accept them often seems as much a duty as to make return for them according to our means and opportunities. It is in this way that we are to cultivate and improve all generous sentiments and charitable activi-

ties among men. To decline a gift may in many a case show greater fear of temptation and less consciousness of virtue than to accept it.

And if the way to hate a man is to do him an injury, and to love a man is to show him a kindness, then it would seem that we are bound to expose ourselves to the favors and benefactions of our fellowmen in order to secure their love, and to cultivate and exercise in them all those kindly affections which are so essential to the improvement and elevation of human character and society. We have need to foster all kindly and unselfish inclinations in every one whom we can reach and influence ; and to do this, we should not shrink from taking upon ourselves obligations to show favor to all classes of men throughout the whole sphere of our influence.

Now this view of our duty, in respect to the acceptance of gifts, may well abate our reluctance to accept eternal life as the gift of God.

It is not a mistake to suppose that many do not like this way of entrance into heaven. There are hearts now just like the hearts of Joseph's unfaithful brethren, who were afraid to receive corn to save their lives unless they paid for it. If Naaman, for his healing, could have paid Elisha a large price, he would not have turned away from the prophet's door in a rage. Another person of a different class, though animated with the same spirit, is seen in the young ruler, who asked our Lord what good thing he should do in order to inherit eternal life. This desire to buy everlasting

blessedness is found in the hearts of men of every age and in every land. It is not more a consciousness of sin than it is a desire for endless felicity that maintains the vast structures of manifold religions in the world. It is the longing for eternal life "that anoints priests, declares fasts, keeps lents, rears altars, and sacrifices hecatombs." It is to merit or purchase salvation that men, who see the brevity of time and the imperfection of earthly joy, are naturally inclined when they put forth their efforts to gain heaven.

But the salvation made known in the Gospel cannot be bought. It is above all price ; and all who receive it must accept eternal life as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Bible does not conceal or keep back this truth. If you will not accept the boon on this ground, there is no eternal life for you. The duty of receptiveness to the favors of others should disarm your hostility and do away your reluctance to accept this gift of God. You should, on the contrary, gladly and gratefully accept the benefaction which the infinite Source of Life offers you through the Divine Mediator.

What though it be too costly for you to buy it—what though it be too vast for you to earn it—what though it be too precious for you to deserve it—what though the blood of the Son of God only could purchase it ; you ought none the less to welcome the boon, and show your sense of obligation for so unspeakable a blessing. Beyond all readiness to receive great favors from your fellowmen, you should be willing to

open your heart and hand for the acceptance of this gift of God.

You have no right to throw life away—not even your present mortal life. Wilful suicide is a great offense. It is a vice, as it destroys the suicide himself. It is a sin, as it disobeys the law of God. It is also a crime, as it injures the order and right of civil society. The community has an interest in the life of every one of its members; and the man who destroys his own physical frame is very guilty. And if he ought not to do this, still less should any one throw away eternal life, which is freely offered to every one as the gift of God.

In view of the nature of this gift, which God offers, it is therefore seen that every man is under obligation to accept it. To reject eternal life is to disobey God, to wrong your own soul, and to injure the whole commonwealth of the redeemed and saved in heaven. They desire the increase of their number as ardently as any nation on earth longs for its own enlargement. And just as often as you decline eternal life and choose eternal death, you aim a blow at the prosperity and increase of God's everlasting kingdom of heaven.

The nature of the Giver as well as of the gift presses you to accept it. You might perhaps well enough decline the gift of a man whose character, station, and possessions are all inferior to your own; for a man's associates not only mark him, but also shape him. We grow into the likeness of our companions, as some plants assume the colors of the liquids which they

absorb, and as some low types of animate creation change their hue to correspond with the objects around them. There are, therefore, weighty reasons why you might hesitate to hold fellowship with some men "as concerning giving and receiving." But there is not a particle of ground at this point to justify your rejection of the gift of God.

Should a poor and needy man offer you a present, it might appear unseemly, or even unjust, for you to take from him the maintenance of his comfort or his life. And should a very bad man propose to make you a great gift, there might be connected with its acceptance such a necessity of contact and participation in his wickedness as to require you to decline his proposal, and so keep yourself pure. But there is no justification of this kind for any one who declines or neglects the offer of God's great gift. Jehovah is neither destitute nor base. He receives not the worship of men because He needs any thing. The Maker of the universe, the Author of all life, whether in heaven or earth, He exhausts not His infinite resources in order to confer eternal life upon every one of our fallen race who will accept the priceless boon. His infinite fullness can as well supply the wants of millions upon millions of needy and dying souls as His almighty power can support the flight of the smallest sparrow. The earth is full of His riches, according to the beautiful idea and expression of the Psalmist. But this is not all. The whole universe is a vast magazine of His treasures. His wealth is so unsearchable that it cannot diminish

His possessions to supply the wants of every living thing for evermore. You should therefore gratefully accept from His hands the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

His excellence and holiness also plead for the acceptance of His great gift. Were he a sinful, malignant, and treacherous Being, you might well enough reject His offer, as Jesus in the wilderness spurned the overtures of Satan. You might recoil from His presence, and shun all intercourse with Him. The Psalmist prays God to gather not his soul with sinners nor his life with bloody men; and were it sure that a gift from God's hand would make you a companion of the wicked forever, and bind you to the service of Satan, you ought to discard the gift and shun the tempter.

But God is holy. His character is perfect. And all His attributes are motives which urge and press you to accept from such a Being the gift of eternal life. Though He is the infinite, eternal, and immaculate God, whom all worlds obey, and all holy creatures worship, He deigns to offer you the greatest good which you can possess or prize; and His supreme goodness is a reason why you should accept your own supreme good as a gift from His hand—for the offer of this gift springs from His infinitely benevolent heart.

Who can measure or imagine the wickedness of the soul that will not accept the gift of eternal life?

I have read of miserable dwellers in dungeons, the prisons of criminal men, who through long incarcera-

tion, had become so demented, infatuate, and bereft of all desire for liberty, that they preferred the darkness and confinement of their cells to the light and freedom of the whole world. Do you lament their folly, and pity their infatuation, which makes them choose the darkness and destruction of close imprisonment rather than suffer the brief inconveniences of unusual light? And will you make a more wretched choice, and abide forever in the gloomy prison of despair, and endure the miseries of everlasting death, rather than accept the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord?

Consider, I pray you, what you may soon find this eternal life to be in all the blessedness of heaven. The very perfection of this eternal life is another argument which impels you to accept it. This eternal life is not like our present mortal existence, an unceasing struggle against the great enemy, whose victory draws nearer every day, so that the question of our fall into the grave is only a question of time. The present life is a tumultuous stream, that runs its downward course through the valley of tears, and at length disappears in the darkness and gloom of the sepulchre. Are you one in whom and to whom it seems bright, and beautiful, and desirable? Gladly let it be so; but you are the very ones whose experience bears witness that it feels the discomfort and suffering of care, fear, vexation, disappointment, anxiety, bereavement, and pain, with all the manifold inflictions of sin, and the sure prospect that all its comforts and joys will speedily

end in the grave. You cannot fail to see that there is no life here in comparison with that eternal life which you are urged and entreated to accept as the gift of God.

That life, in its perfection, is not full of tossings to and fro, in vain and fruitless efforts for some satisfying good. It is peaceful, harmonious, and joyful. The will of the saint is transformed into the will of the Saviour. The once sinful, restless soul becomes a partaker of the divine nature, and is forever escaped from the lustful corruptions of this world. Service of God becomes reigning with Him; for the same eternal life pervades the Head and all the members, and imparts perfect tranquility and bliss to all. Some degree of this happiness the Christian may here enjoy. He may commit his soul to the keeping of his faithful Creator, the Author and Giver of eternal life, and know that all his best interests, both for time and eternity, are perfectly safe. Thus, in the whole system of God's creation, and under the Divine government, he may rest in sweet composure, having the assurance that the gift of eternal life carries with it all desirable good. He is now, in the divine system, no longer like a dislocated joint in the body. A limb out of joint has no ease. It lets not the body enjoy any, so far as it can disturb it. And godless men are merely dis-jointed members of one great body. The Christian's proper life of perfect harmony and tranquility they cannot enjoy. There must be conformity to God—the participation of the eternal life which He offers—before

the souls of men can live in peace with their fellow mortals and with their Maker. But according as God's eternal life flows into you, and you become conformed to His image, your blessedness grows ; and when your conformity to His character, will, and purpose becomes perfect—when His desire is no sooner known than it is hailed with delight—when every motion of the great Mover becomes the law to guide and determine all your motions—when all the smaller wheels in the great system of the heavenly commonwealth run at the first impulse of the great Living Wheel, without friction or hindrance—when the obstruction of sin shall no longer check the love of God—when all the opposition of rebellious flesh and sinful hearts shall cease forever—Oh how great will be the blessedness of this delightful harmony—this eternal peace and union of souls with each other and with God ! There is before us a life which is not only eternal, but also heavenly and divine. Oh what joy to possess a life perfectly free from the servitude of sin, the slavery of Satan, the suffering of guilt, the fear of punishment, the experience of pain, the consciousness of fallibility, the endurance of temptation, bereavement, illness, grief, weariness, and death ! There is a life from which every cord and snare of death is broken, and in which the holy soul will have the free exercise of all its powers, and the delight of endless activity, without fatigue or distress. The heart will feel no anguish ; the will, no thralldom ; the sensibilities, no pain ; the conscience, no guilt ; the affections, no

wounds ; the habits, no disruptions ; but the whole soul, with all the society which it desires and loves, will be peaceful, unbroken, and supremely holy and happy.

Thus the very nature of this life is a motive which impels you to accept it as God's free gift.

He offers it to you through Jesus Christ ; and the Son of God has come from heaven, and drawn near to you in your own nature, and died for your sins in your place, that He might bring this eternal life to you, and offer it for your acceptance. Oh, do not spurn Him away, and so add a crushing weight to your burden of guilt.

X.

Religion in the Household.

"When the Gospel comes to a people that have long sitten in darkness, there may be numerous converts of all ages; but when the Gospel has long been preached, in plenty and purity, and ordinances regularly administered, few but those who are called in early life are called at all. A very judicious and pious writer, Richard Baxter, is of opinion that in a regular state of the Church, and a tolerable measure of faithfulness and purity in its officers, family instruction and government are the usual means of conversion, public ordinances of edification."—JOHN WITHERSPOON.

GOD is the dwelling-place of His people in all generations; for in Him they evermore experience rest, protection, sustenance, love and joy. But the reverse is also the case; for God dwells in his people, and even their bodies are the temple of the Divine Spirit. The human heart, in which the Holy One makes His abode, is peculiarly the home of religion; and the Apostle Paul, in one of his letters to Timothy, plainly intimates that this home may continue in the same household from age to age. Thus the faith dwelt in the same family through the three generations of Lois, Eunice, and Timotheus, as it had previously done in the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the descendants of these patriarchs, as well as in other cases without number.

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It is through the increasing and spreading families of the pious that religion extends its benign influence more and more widely in the world, and thus in the generations to come salvation will flow to the ends of the earth. To the chosen of God in this day, as well as in the times of the apostles, it may be said : " The promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off—even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Doubtless some future day will see the people generally, throughout the world, the devout and joyful worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Christian faith can never be anywhere more than a stranger and a foreigner, who tarries for a season, unless it makes its home in the household, and dwells in the heart of the family. How shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, unless religion dwells in the household and grows with the multiplying families of the faithful?

We may have a Sunday religion—a religion of the church, and even a religion of the Sabbath-school—but Sabbath, church, and school combined will not be sufficient to make Christianity progressive and permanent without religion in the household as the foundation on which they must rest. You may send millions of Christian missionaries into the lands of heathenism, but you cannot make true religion durable and dominant there, unless you cause it to dwell in the family ; to descend from parents to children—from

generation to generation—and so to direct the activities, the associations, the employments, the recreations, the expenses, the expenditures, the manners, the habits, and the innermost spirit of the household. In the movements which are made to Christianize the pagan world, it is not a mistake to send religion embodied in the household. If you cannot give the heathen examples of Christian families, you cannot establish the religion which the Bible inculcates in the regions of idolatry. You cannot even maintain this religion in a country where it has once gained possession.

All Christian parents feel, of course, more or less concern to foresee and know what religious or irreligious influences will permeate and control the future experiences of their children. And when I trace the streams of influence now active, and mark their direction, I see nothing which gives me so much solicitude for my own children, the youth of America, and the Church of God in this land, with the freedom which it only can maintain and preserve, as the want, and, at least, the relative decay of the religion of the household.

“Hear, O Israel : the Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

In these words we see the duty of maintaining one feature of religion in the household—that of religious teaching. Here, also, Divine inspiration shows us the method of instruction—a method which neither the world in past time nor the people of our own age has outgrown. It is a method which no progress of our schools can do away safely ; for religious instruction must be unceasing, attractive, and familiar, in order to produce the most precious and desirable fruits in the consciousness and conduct of the young. No formal lessons, at set times and places, will answer the demand in its perfection and fullness ; for in the instruction of children “precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line ; here a little and there a little.” This instruction must run through and through the life of the household, and pervade all forms of the family activity. It must be not merely the moral and intellectual food of the children prepared for them and dispensed to them every day, but also the surrounding and pervasive atmosphere of their homes—the very temperature and vital air of the house. Its theme and substance must be love and obedience to God ; but the occasions and means of the promotion and manifestation of love and obedience to our Heavenly Father are almost infinite and endless ; and the inculcation of duty should be in the same measure at home and abroad—in the house, and in the field, and by the way—in the morning, in the evening ; at noon, at night. It should flow ceaselessly out of the parental heart. It should have all the

vitality of parental experience, and all the vivacity and glow of parental affection. In the multiplicity of its forms and the intensity of its life it should equal the manifold and cordial demonstrations of a mother's love. In a word, the whole spirit of the household should be full of religion, so as to make the best Christian improvement of all the educational opportunities which the family affords.

But teaching is not the only part and activity of the household life which religion should pervade, saturate, and sanctify. The working of the family should move within the same spiritual atmosphere. The employments of every day and of every worker in the family should chiefly regard the religious improvement, progress, and prosperity of its members, that God may be glorified thereby. This should determine the choice of each one's profession or occupation, in view of those specific endowments, which God bestows in every case, and those particular providences which indicate each individual's duty.

Some families labor for a frugal subsistence, others gain a pleasant competence ; and few reach or possess abundant wealth. But religion will not find the most congenial home in the hearts of all the members of any household, unless the whole family employments feel the gushing spring and influence of the Christian spirit and move forward in the atmosphere of Christian principle and love. If a merely secular and worldly impulse moves and controls the members of a family in their daily employment, that family can be in no fit

condition to appreciate and improve the religious advantages and influences that may lie in other directions or flow from other sources.

And the worship as well as the working of the family should mainly seek the religious welfare and prosperity of the household. Yet it sometimes happens in a family that where the forms of worship are observed, and even the spirit and power of worship are felt and manifested in some good degree, the great end of the religious growth and improvement of the household, in its unity and in its several members, is not the object mainly sought in the family worship, as subservient to the supreme object of glory to God. The Church in general—not the Church in the house—or the country, or the congregation of which the family is a part so overshadows and excludes the interests of the household, that the worship almost loses its specific character of family devotion. Now if we could have but one of the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which are in use in the English Church, we should prefer the Morning Prayer to the Evening Prayer, because the former makes the household so much more prominent than the latter in their several confessions and petitions. For it is not enough that the teaching and the working of all the adult or productive members of the house should, under God, have the religious good of all its inmates in view as the chief object; but all the manifold activities of the common life should combine for the same end. When the teaching, the worship and the working unite and

make a threefold cord, it is one not easily broken. It binds the inmates of the house together in the most grateful bonds, and draws every heart towards God and towards the purity and the blessedness of heaven, with a gentle force, which is most effective, like the power of the combined rays of light which maintain the vitality of all animate nature. But if the teaching untwists the worship, and the working ravel out both, they will not have the needful strength for those cords of love which God uses to bind the souls of man to the Saviour.

But nature's vital and productive activities which cover the earth with beauty and fruitfulness, spring not from the combination of a few elements only. Air and moisture are not enough. There must also be light and heat, and many other requisites for the result. So, in the household, instruction, work and worship must combine with other influences to produce the richest and ripest fruits of the Christian faith.

In many a household, one of the chief elements of its life and history is recreation. In some, it is diversion, amusement, dissipation—such dissipation as the Christian mind must ever pronounce vicious and sinful. But recreation may be more than proper for every member of a Christian household. There should be changes of occupation for every toilsome worker, and, in some cases, for short periods, entire cessation of laborious activity. For the very young much amusement or diversion is needful. The natural restlessness of children should turn in many directions and display

infinite diversities of action. Both the physical and mental exercise should be susceptible of rapid changes corresponding to the vivacity of childhood, and should be exceedingly manifold and various. And all these elements of the household life should be as thoroughly imbued with a religious spirit as are the teaching and the praying. They should steadily keep in view the highest spiritual welfare of the family, that the Christian faith may ever dwell in the heart of every member. In no department of family activity, perhaps, is true religion in greater danger than in this sphere of recreation. The members of a Christian household are nowhere else more likely to depart from the comprehensive principle, that whatsoever we do, we must do all to the glory of God. Yet any man may renew his powers, invigorate his strength, rest his mental faculties or his physical frame, and do all this in the highest love to God and with the sincerest desire to please Him. He may cultivate music, read good books, share Christian company, hold communion with nature in solitude, as he walks the shore of the deep-sounding sea, or takes his way among the mountain peaks, or over the wide plains which God has made for human use. Endless are the forms and infinite the sources of recreation open to every Christian man, woman and child. You may find refreshment and delight as your attentive eye and reflective mind mark the habits and the movements of the solitary snail that creeps up the sedge to escape the rising tide ; or you may find greater animation and pleasure in many

human voices, whose melodious combinations form the harmonies which cause your heartstrings to vibrate with tenderest emotions. But whatever your recreations, they should tend to the highest religious ends—as much so as any other occupation of your time, or of your mental and bodily powers. There is just at this point need of special vigilance lest the family order and life permit some amusement or association which wars against the highest religious interests of the household. All stimulation, excitement or levity which quenches the fire of the Divine Spirit, damps the holy ardor of the soul's love to God, detracts from the heartiness of the divine worship, or weakens the desire for God's glory—in a word, all diversion or dissipation that is hostile to spiritual religion is no proper element in the life of the household. The family should never make mere sensual gratification its law. It has a divine organization in order to produce a godly posterity, and its structure and aim are perverted, and violence is done to the divine intentions, whenever all the departments of its activity are not used to promote the holiness of its members in heart and life.

All the accumulations of property, and all the expenditure of financial resources for the family should have spiritual ends in view. It is not inconsistent with its highest welfare that a part of its pecuniary means should promote religion beyond the family circle. Our golden coins are sometimes like golden grains of wheat—we must scatter to increase them. We may

withhold more than enough, and therefore reap a harvest of poverty. It may sometimes be necessary to lavish the nation's treasure in order to preserve the nation's life. According as God prospers us, we must give to the needy, or we shall fail in duty toward them, and forfeit the favor of Him from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. The prosperity of the household, therefore, even to children's children, demands that all its accumulations and expenditures should be under the control of Christian principles.

There are many reasons why religion should thus rule the household.

First, the family embraces the dearest relations of life, and therefore especially religion should sanctify all its activities. This is none the less so because religion should control us in all our relations to our fellowmen—in every connection of business—in every province of public or private duty. It should be present and predominant everywhere; for we are amenable to the Most High everywhere and at all times. Are we not bound to serve Him always in body and spirit? Whatever our place, are we not in His creation? Whatever we may do, must we not do it for His praise? But the very supremacy of religion gives it a peculiar fitness for special prominence in the household; for where the dearest relations and the purest affections of our nature have their home—there the highest spiritual influence should control and consecrate them. Furthermore, it is the very ge-

nus of Christianity to make us desire the greatest good of our fellowmen for the longest duration ; and certainly our chief concern and first of all should be for those who are in the most intimate and tender relations to ourselves. To make our solicitude fruitful and salutary, we should carefully avoid every act which would mar the beauty of holiness, or present religion in an unlovely aspect. On the contrary, we should most diligently practice all those virtues which will make religion appear attractive and desirable ; and the family circle is the very best place to manifest the affectionate, kindly and benevolent spirit of piety towards God and men. Religion aims to save the soul and make it holy and blessed forever ; and nature itself prompts us to seek the highest good of those we most love, and to seek it also in the best way. Religion, therefore, should rule the house.

There is another consideration. The family is the scene of our most constant and powerful influence. Unceasing is the pressure of our ways, words, habits, and even the most subtle spirit of our character upon the inmates of our house. There is a plastic force of this kind, whose activity is incessant and almost irresistible within the whole compass of its reach. Beyond the family circle there is the greatest diversity of influence among men. A thousand circumstances in the condition of human affairs and human society must ever maintain this diversity. But in his own household every man has a favorable position to show the force and the worth of his own character. In-

deed, within this little world, the influence of every member is unceasing. The husband acts upon the wife, and the wife upon the husband—parents upon children, and children upon parents—and, even more, brothers and sisters upon each other. This homely action usually produces no signal and dramatic effect. Its course is gradual and not at all singular ; but it is none the less ceaseless and mighty. It is the light—not the earthquake—which is almost omnipotent ; and the family influence shows its power even earlier than the dawn of childish reason. It anticipates the aurora of knowledge. It works every day, and every hour of every day, like the vital force which builds up little by little the lofty oak and the coral island. In this way it most effectually shapes thought, feeling, sentiment, associations, manners and even motions of the body and aspects of the countenance. The dullest intellect penetrates the peculiar aspect of each household, and perceives that each has a character of its own. Wealth, display, pleasure or piety may be its chief characteristic. It may be neat or squalid, spiritual or sordid, sluggish or sprightly, intelligent or ignorant, or especially noteworthy for any one of a thousand qualities ; but each family has its own distinctive character as peculiar to its members as the features of their faces. Manifestly, therefore, in a position of so much influence as every family affords, every person should acquire such a character and pursue such a life as would make the true religion dwell in the household and with all its members from gene-

ration to generation. Thus we should hasten the good days to come when all shall know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest, and all flesh shall come unto the Hearer of prayer.

This is an important attainment, and a worthy motive for religion in the household. And to gain this result our religion must not be merely a religion of the Church and of the Sabbath-School, nor even of the closet. It is indeed our duty to show our concern and put forth our zeal for the House of God, and for the organized efforts in behalf of the religious interests of the young from Sabbath to Sabbath. It is also our duty to enter into our closet and shut the door and pray to our Father in secret. But there is another duty no less imperative. It is to do our utmost in making the whole family, whose life we share, breathe the most healthful atmosphere of piety, and so hasten the advent of that day which shall see the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. For this purpose we should keep the family in constant communion with heaven, so that the intercourse between God and all its intelligent members shall be easy, genial, confidential and delightful. We should maintain this family fellowship with heaven in such constancy and cordiality of spirit that it would seem no strange and abrupt removal should a member of our family pass from our homes to reside henceforth in the heavenly household. In this way let all the members of the family, removing in due time one by one, reunite in the heavenly home, and each at

the coming add to the joy of all there forever. This intimate communion with heaven will doubtless bring more of heaven to earth, and greatly facilitate the progress of true religion from heart to heart, and from land to land, until the whole world devoutly worship the living God. For who can doubt that the want of this type of religion in some households is the cause of those sad departures from the ways of wisdom and piety which particular members of those households make so conspicuous and painful. We may not believe that any members of a family are absolutely responsible for the piety of other members ; for God only can renew the human soul and impart a holy life to its spiritual powers shattered and crushed in the ruins of the fall. But we are bound to be faithful to those trusts which first of all unite us in the firmest relations to others ; and most solemn and tender is the obligation that binds us to fidelity with reference to our kindred. No duty to any man can be more imperative than to make our whole life, and especially the temper and spirit of our home, most effective in forming such a character within its members that true religion will dwell with them, and with their posterity after them, however widely their descendants may spread abroad over the earth, and whatever the duration of their continuance among mortal men.

It may be proper to add here an additional motive for the religion of the household. As the plastic force of the family is greatly influential, so the household life tests and discloses the character of every man.

Here at least he wears no mask. The cares, annoyances and troubles of his position, as well as its comforts, joys and delights, sooner or later reveal the substantial character. Hence the necessity of true religion in the household for every man who would bless his family. If he has not the real personal possession and experience of religion, he cannot impart its advantages to those with whom he is almost as intimate as with his own thoughts. But let the excellence of Christian piety be the genuine and inmost character of the man ; let the household be thus made the home of pure and amiable affections ; let the air of religious tranquility and cheerfulness pervade and surround it ; let the forms of religion be the shapely and graceful body which the spirit of piety and love animates and beautifies, giving to the whole a transcendent charm ; let no symptoms of coldness, neglect, petulance, strife or godlessness usurp the place of gentleness, deference, kindness, sympathy, forethought and devotion—in a word, let true religion rule the house, and we may expect it to abide from age to age. The memories of such a household will be joyful forever, and its revelation of character will be a glorious light that will not fade away even amid the brightness of heaven.

What words and symbols among men can fitly show forth the importance of the religion of the household ? What valuable interest does it fail to bless ? Its prevalence in a good degree seems to be essential to the preservation and improvement of Christian society ; the salvation of the young ; the prosperity and progress

of the Church ; the security and stability of the nation ; and the best interests of humanity throughout the world. Every member of the household is bound to the performance of duties which will bless the family, and send their influence far beyond the home circle—far into the future, and even into other worlds. For the religion of the household gives vigor to all the Christian hopes, comforts and joys of this life not only, but also becomes an element of that eternal blessedness which awaits God's chosen ones in heaven. And in the light of this truth, who does not see its priceless worth? Who will not give all diligence to maintain its perpetual existence, and uphold its beneficent power from generation to generation?

IX.

Revivals among Children.

"One thing that is remarkable touching the increase of the Church at this day, is this: That where Christ sends the ministration of the Spirit, there many young people are brought in to Christ, as being most free from the forms of the former age, and from the doctrines and traditions of men, taught and received instead of the pure and unmixed Word of God."—WILLIAM DELL.

THE remarkable religious manifestations among children in various parts of the country induced the Suffolk County Sabbath School Association to cause the preparation of a paper on this subject. A committee was appointed for the purpose. This committee met in Sag Harbor, on the 1st of November, at the residence of Charles N. Brown, Esq., who entertained them with generous and Christian hospitality. Their action made it the duty of the writer to set forth the following considerations, and to present them to the Association in its meeting at West Hampton, December 13, 1864.*

1. There was a deep consciousness of the want of revivals among children. Their absence is deplorable ; for the young are capable of religious emotions as efficient, and perhaps as permanent, as those which

* The Association adopted the Report forthwith, and soon published one thousand copies in pamphlet form.

mark the religious experience of full-grown persons ; and unless conversion takes place in childhood or youth, the probabilities of its experience in ripper years become rapidly and ever more less and less.

The present year has witnessed few or no extensive and prosperous revivals among the young in our county, though the records of the past show it to be a law of Church History, that converts to spiritual and evangelical religion always and everywhere come mainly from the ranks of the young.

2. This fact alone clearly indicates the possibility of revivals among children ; and the religious history of our county affords abundant illustrations. Take, for example, the town of East Hampton. The revival which prevailed at the close of the fifty years' pastorate of the second minister, the Rev. Nathaniel Huntting, was so much among the young, that, in his minute, accurate, and sometimes daily record of its history, he often speaks of the new converts as " the young people." To the same effect, at a later period, just a hundred years ago, the Rev. Dr. Buell speaks of a day in which " the Lord began to carry on His work with astonishing power. In the after part of the day," he says, " I discoursed with a young person in an agony of distress for sin, and an interest in the Saviour. Near the evening, I went to see a young man." " Before I came to the house, I met some young persons under concern on their way to visit me." " They and some others soon came into the house after me," " till there were about a hundred persons assembled, with whom I

spent some hours in prayer and exhortation." "It is supposed that thirty or forty persons went home from this meeting under most powerful convictions of sin." In a few months the revival added more persons to the full membership of the church than there were families in the town. Of this revival, the faithful and judicious pastor writes: "There are persons from six to seven years of age to above seventy, who hope they have received the saving grace of God in this day; yet I think the work has been principally among our young people." That revival was the first fruits of thousands of converts, through similar revivals, which followed it, as a glorious harvest, in many congregations on Long Island, and others in New England, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. The powerful revivals some forty years later, in the same town, under the pastorate of the Rev. Lyman Beecher, also commenced and chiefly prevailed among the young, especially among the pupils in the Academy.

The history of the adjoining town shows the same religious features. Of the revival in Bridge Hampton, for example, in 1799 and 1800, Dr. Woolworth speaks thus: "Persons of almost every age, from sixty-five down to ten or twelve years, were hopefully made subjects of the saving grace of God. Those who exhibited the most satisfactory reason of the hope, were from sixteen to forty years of age."

Illustrations in point might be drawn from the history of the other towns of the county. There is, for instance, the revival in Huntington twelve or thir-

teen years since ; the revivals in various congregations of Southold in 1855 ; and the powerful revival, two years later, on Shelter Island.

Furthermore, a consideration of the point in hand need not overlook the fact that, in the revival times of Wesley and Whitefield, the greatest theologian and mental philosopher of American birth thought it not unworthy of his transcendent genius and talents to write a full account of the conversion and religious life and experience of a child four years old, who was led to the Saviour by the Christian efforts of her recently-converted brother, a child of eleven years. There never was a man in this country more fit or better able than Jonathan Edwards to judge between a spurious and a genuine conversion, or between true and false religious experience ; and he wrote the narrative of this child's conversion a year and a half after the commencement of her new Christian life. He wrote this account of her gracious change for the Rev. Dr. Colman, of Boston, who himself "walked from early childhood in the fear and love of God," and who wrote and published much "on the duty of young people to give their hearts to God," as well as on "early piety," and "seeking God early," with other kindred topics.

Illustrations of the point before us might be drawn, almost without limit, from the Bible history of the Church. It was only the little ones, who came out of Egypt, that the revivals in the desert prepared to enter the promised land. They became not a prey, as

their parents feared, but the possessors of Canaan. In all the great periods of the elevation of the Church of God and the religious consciousness of His people to a higher plane, there are distinct manifestations of the revival of religion among the young. We think of Moses, Joshua, David, Josiah, and Daniel as examples. It was among the young captives in Babylon that the destructive tendency to idolatry on the part of the chosen people was overcome. It was when the children sang hosanna to the Saviour in the house of God, that all the city was moved, and our Lord received the most conspicuous honors.

We need not think it too much for revivals of religion to prevail among the young; for the Bible and its doctrines are peculiarly fit for the minds of children. This appears in many ways. We see it in the avidity and intense earnestness with which very small children listen to the recital of Biblical narratives, like the story of Joseph and the childhood of Jesus. We see it in the power of the Bible to quicken and almost create the consciences of children. We see it in the fact that, as a general rule, the young will study the Bible more readily than any other book. We see it in the variety, simplicity, sublimity, spirituality, vitality, and universality of the Holy Scriptures, whose scope embraces not a nation, tribe, or country only; but the whole human race. We see it in the happy effects of the Sacred Book, in such revivals as a faithful pastor brings to view where he says: "Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in

talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ ; the gloriousness of the way of salvation ; the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God ; His glorious work in the conversion of a soul ; the truth and certainty of the great things of God's Word." The writer of this report saw a beautiful example of the Bible's adaptation to the minds of the young in a revival, fifteen years since, which commenced in the study of the New Testament by his pupils ; and in one month not less than twenty out of fifty boys in the school gave delightful evidence of a gracious change of heart and life. This peculiar fitness of God's Word to youthful minds shows the possibility of revivals among children anywhere and at any time.

And the Holy Spirit may successfully use the vivacity, impulsiveness and sociability of the young for the same end. Their emotional nature is easily moved ; and as the seat of true religion is chiefly in the affections—as the great hindrance to conversion and the revival of religion is mainly in the heart—the young are much more likely than the old to yield to the converting grace of God. The latter are less susceptible and sympathetic, and more set in their modes of thought, ways of feeling, and habits of action. They are also less social than the young. They care less for the opinions and conduct of others. They rely more upon themselves. Mentally, and even morally and religiously, they are more isolate and separate from their fellows. But, in the young, the impulsive powers of the soul are yet vigorous. They are

quick and susceptible to the influence of motives, often eager to follow the example of others, and ready to yield to the requirements of truth and duty upon their hearts and consciences.

Hence the nature of the case, as well as the history of the Church, shows us the possibility of revivals of religion among children.

And even though it were impossible with men, is it not possible with God? Is He not most gracious and merciful, as well as wise and mighty? Can He not pour out His Spirit when and where and how it shall most glorify His own perfections? Does He not hold even the heart of the greatest in His hand? Does He not uphold and direct all worlds and all creatures so as to accomplish His own eternal and most holy purposes? What power can resist the force of His gracious and benevolent will? He can fill the soul of any youth with holy love, and make it delight in God, and desire the salvation of sinners more than all worldly pleasures, honors and possessions. He can change the most careless into thoughtful and considerate persons. He can open blind eyes to behold a new and wondrous scene, even the reality, vastness and infinite importance of spiritual and eternal things. He can reveal the deep wickedness of the heart, and impel the sinner to seek and find forgiveness in Jesus. He can show lost souls their unspeakable guilt in neglecting the great salvation which He offers them through the submission and death of His own Son in their behalf. He can make the young see and appreciate the preciousness of the

blood of Jesus ; the worth of the immortal soul ; the blessedness and eternity of heaven ; and the dreadful danger and wickedness of all who walk in the way of sinners, and turn not to Christ for salvation. He can thus cause them to trust in Jesus, and yield themselves up unto God. Thus, in fine, he can produce revivals of religion among the young.

3. And are these not exceedingly desirable in order to give the most important objects the chief place in the time, thought, judgment, affections, choices and purposes of the young ? Do not worldly objects now give tone and character to most of the employments, associations and pleasures of their life ? What but revivals of religion can make our children deem wealth, genius, honor, power, position and success in this world less desirable than Christian graces and spiritual growth ? Do not worldly possessions seem, in the minds of many young persons, to be richer and even more substantial and durable than all the treasures of religion ? Many deem houses and lands more real than all the enduring riches of righteousness, and more to be sought than the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which God ever keeps for all who faithfully serve Him. Even our children are inclined to look with chief interest upon the enterprises and the accumulations of men in this world—upon human governments, and states and nations—upon the works of art beneath the sun, the cities, the commerce, the inventions, and the abundant resources of the globe ; and to consider these the

most fit and momentous objects of their best thought and effort. Now revivals of religion are immensely desirable to correct their dangerous mistake and overcome their fatal inclination. What else will teach them that all human possessions in this world will soon perish—that we ourselves will soon forsake all the objects and pursuits of earth—that the whole globe, with all its states, cities, governments and empires will soon dissolve forever? What else will make them understand that the most fertile fields of industry and the most affluent channels of commerce will soon be to us no more than dust and ashes? It is not only desirable that the children in our Sabbath-schools and in all our households should be converted, and converted early; but it is also desirable that there should be revivals among them. One of the historians of the “Great Awakening,” which appeared in this country some hundred and twenty years since, made these remarks: “Instead of vain mirth among young people, there is now either mourning under a sense of the guilt of sin, or holy rejoicing in Christ Jesus; and instead of their lewd songs are now to be heard from them songs of praise to God, and the Lamb that was slain to redeem them by His blood.” “The souls of very many little children have been remarkably enlightened, and their hearts wonderfully affected and enlarged, and their mouths opened, expressing themselves far beyond their years.” This revival has not escaped the notice of our great national historian, George Bancroft, though he has never shown any special interest in evangelical

religion. So far from being taught in its schools, he was early trained to deny the proper divinity of Jesus. Yet he says this great revival was "a subject of interest and instruction to the world, having, as many think, a permanent influence on the character of the people, fitting them for the great events in their history that were soon to come." It is well known that the revival showed its greatest power and won its greatest triumphs among the young.

And revivals among children are desirable because the progress of good morals and true religion in human history is mainly a succession of revivals. It is the course of one who makes his way up the sides of a lofty mountain. His path is not a dead level. It may sometimes be an even track. It is more frequently a decline than a perfectly level grade. But now and then a great rise lifts him into a higher region, gives him a wider prospect, and a rarer, purer atmosphere. Thus his course upward and heavenward is a progress of successive and healthful stages and elevations. So it is, for the most part, in the religious life of an individual, and in the general history of the Christian Church. The great leaders of God's people are gracious persons early in life. We think of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Josiah, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Daniel, and we may include Paul and Timothy, as well as Wickliffe and Huss, Luther and Calvin, Whitefield and Wesley, Bunyan and Carey, Spurgeon and Hammond. These are revival men.

The case is the same in the life of particular

churches, as in the course of general history. The stream of their Christian experience and activity flows not perfectly smooth and even continually. The refreshing dew may possibly feed it lightly at all times ; and the gentle shower may now and then add some drops to supply its current and continue its onward course ; but it needs also the abundant rain to fill its banks, and send down its mighty volume, making it larger and better the longer and farther it flows. Thus the vital current of a particular Church or Sabbath-school needs revival influences, just as the majestic river of General Church History needs the sublime outpouring of the rains of heaven—as on the day of Pentecost, in the great Protestant Reformation, and in the great American Awakening. It is in this way that God maintains the true religion in the world, and makes it advance among men, growing wider and deeper and richer with each successive century.

Unspeakably desirable is such a revival among the children of our own churches, Sabbath-schools and households. For it is through the young that we should seek and expect God's blessings.

4. This principle brings us face to face with the duty of preparation for revivals among children. And we may safely say that we have already taken the first step in the performance of this duty. We have set the subject before us for consideration. It is now incumbent upon us to ponder it well. Thorough consideration will make it appear all the more important. The welfare of our children in this life ; their

salvation and blessedness in the life to come ; the prosperity and continual usefulness of particular Sabbath-schools and churches ; the general interests of the country and of the whole Church of Christ ; and the supreme purposes and glory of God are connected with this matter. We should earnestly consider the subject in its relations to these most momentous interests.

Consideration should lead to penitence for our past neglect and unconcern ; and the prayer of faith should accompany the confession of sin before God. With deep humiliation of soul, and thorough consecration to Christ, we should importune the divine favor in behalf of our children. We should pray as Jacob wrestled with the angel for his little ones, and as Hannah besought the Lord for Samuel. We should seek the spiritual life of our children with all the intensity and sense of personal unworthiness which Jairus showed in asking and obtaining the life of his daughter from the power and grace of our Lord. We should plead with all the humility, earnestness and importunity of the Canaanite, who sought and found divine mercy for her demoniac daughter. Our prayer should spring from such a depth of solicitude as would constrain us to fast as well as supplicate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our children. Even should there be, in particular places, no public fasting of the Church or the Sabbath-school, there should be private and pungent fasting on the part of families and individuals. God's people have well used this help to faith and devotion in other ages and other lands, as well as in our

own country and times ; and doubtless we greatly need it here and now. Intimate friends may happily join in a concert of private fasting and secret prayer. It is seed which often yields the best harvest of most precious fruit.

These personal and private acts of faith and consecration to God should manifest their power and their fruitfulness in a public walk of devotion, and manifold deeds of beneficence. The public worship of God, as well as the secret communion with Him, should be maintained, with all fidelity and heartiness. And all the charities of life should appear in full activity and shining beauty. We should do our best to improve every opportunity for showing respect, kindness, affection and generosity to others, according to their circumstances.

We should be wise, resolute and zealous in our personal efforts for the conversion and salvation of the young.

Especially should parents train their children with the one great and predominant purpose to save their souls—to make sure of this end, whatever on earth may betide the household. All the employments, associations, expenditures and recreations of the family should ever have this end in view. Religion should rule the whole domestic economy. It should be paramount in all matters of education, business, occupation and profession in life. All these should be made helpful in the great work of securing the salvation of every child in the family. The work of the household,

as well as the worship of the household, should all tend to the same chief end and best result. The whole social life of parents and children alike, as well as their whole devotional and industrial life, should seek the one thing needful. Whatever hinders the attainment of this object, should be done away. Whatever would be likely to endanger it, should be most carefully avoided. The great concern of the family should be to make this life the best preparation, on the part of all its members, for the life to come. This should be well understood at home, and to a good degree among all the friends of the family. This wise, dutiful and happy Christian life of the household is an important and perhaps an essential element in the preparation for the most powerful and delightful revivals among children. The household in which true religion thus dwells and presides, will commonly rejoice, sooner or later, in the Christian life of most or all of the children. They will be ready to bear their part wisely and well, in the conduct of a revival of religion among the children, whenever God's sovereignty shall graciously bestow this unspeakable blessing through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

5. The conduct of a revival, in so far as its divine Author and Giver entrust it to men, must vary according to the previous history and condition of the Church or Sabbath-school now enjoying this great benefaction from heaven, and also according to the special circumstances, associations, attainments and habits of those who are most active and influential in the work.

Specific and particular rules will not apply to every case. The revival may appear in answer to the fervent, importunate and expectant prayers of some faithful Christians. It may spring from some remarkable judgments and inflictions of God's hand upon several young persons, or others, in a Sabbath-school or congregation. It may spread from some other village or neighborhood, as the refreshing rain of summer extends from field to field. It may come suddenly—and show no human agency in its origin—to attest the sovereign grace of God, who bestows His richest blessings, according to infinite wisdom and goodness, when and where, and how He pleases. Each of these cases might require its own mode of action on the part of Christians in the revival.

But there are certain rules of a general character, which are as applicable in a revival among children, as they can be in any revival. They are directions which the wisest, in such cases, have often found exceedingly serviceable.

A faithful and laborious preacher, whose ministry in Brooklyn was blest with a powerful revival, applied in the midst of it for aid to a father in the Church of the highest repute for wisdom and piety. That father replied: "Be clothed with humility. I cannot visit you. I know not a man that you need. Walk with all meekness in the fear of God, and in the power of the Holy Ghost." Go forward with humility and all meekness, and rely upon the Holy Spirit. These are essential rules. They are just as needful for the chil-

dren who may be converted in a revival, as for those upon whom the conduct of the work, under God, mainly depends. The inexperience and immaturity of children make it necessary that they should walk humbly. They cannot bear to be thrust into prominence and be made conspicuous. Religion always, and especially in a time of revival, is in danger from spiritual pride and ambition. It is Jehu, not Joseph, who says: "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." The well-known teachings of the Word of God, and not any sudden, fallible impulses of the human mind, should direct all our activity in a revival of religion. Children are peculiarly teachable, and likely to follow the example and custom of others. It is therefore especially desirable, in a revival among children, that we should lead them to the Bible for instruction, as to all matters of faith and action. What is most prominent there, we should set in the chief place; and pursue those courses, which lead us in the footsteps of our Lord and His apostles. We should adopt new measures just so far as new circumstances require them; for God's Word and grace, and man's nature and need of divine guidance, remain the same from age to age. A revival is a time of unusual growth and progress in religion. Hence, it is exceedingly desirable, that in such a season, there should be the attainment of great symmetry of character, and as full, round and complete an experience of religion as possible. In a revival, there is special danger of defects, on the one hand, and excesses on the other, in the Christian life. There

must be unwonted and courageous efforts for the salvation of souls—for the immediate conversion of sinners. Hence, the temptation arises to neglect other essential duties of our daily life. But we should so act, in the time of high excitement—at the very point of fate—the day of grace—and the harvest of souls—as to show that religion is the very spirit of order and propriety—the very soul of wisdom and forethought. Thus the intensity of our anxiety, the eagerness of our solicitude, the strenuousness of our activity, the steadfastness of our resolution, and the heat of our zeal, should serve us as the very means to let our moderation be known unto all men. It is in the very rage and fury of the battle, that the soldier should be true, firm, steady and mindful of the rules of warfare. It is no time then to let his passions run wild, or his temper and excitement become uncontrollable. No indiscretion should give the enemy an advantage. The whole conduct, and not a part only, should be fit to secure the victory. A revival among children must be full of excitement. But it should be more like the harmonious excitement of an orchestra, than the tumultuous excitement of a mob. There should be a wise adaptation of all the teaching, exhortation, warning, entreaty, associations and prayers and exercises, to the years, the culture, the susceptibilities and attainments of children. And the supplication should be unceasing, and unanimous, that the Holy Spirit would direct every thought and act, put forth to promote His own work, so as to secure the highest good of men, and the

greatest glory of God, in this unspeakably precious manifestation of His grace ; for a revival of religion among children should be an exhibition of the purest spiritual life, on the part of all who direct its course, or feel its saving power.

XII.

Buth.

"To be sure the wise people, and the gay people, and the silly people of this worky-day world, and for the matter of that, all the people but you and I, would laugh to hear that this object which I was so undone at your not seeing, was no other than a single honeysuckle. It grew in a shady lane, and was surrounded by the deepest verdure, while its own figure and coloring, which were quite perfect, were illuminated by a ray of sunshine. There are some common objects, sometimes placed in such a situation, viewed in such a light, and attended by such accompaniments, as to be seen but once in a whole life, and to give one a pleasure entirely new, and this was one of them."—ELIZABETH CARTER TO ELIZABETH MONTAGU.

A GOOD many years ago there was a little heathen girl, who lived and grew up to be a woman, in the land of Moab. When she was very young, I think she was a lovely child, who wished and tried to do just right, as every child ought to do. It was in this way, I suppose, that she spent her days in thought, feeling, and action, when she was a girl; for we know, that in some way, she grew up to be an active, lovely, pious woman. When many years had come and gone, she became the great-grandmother of a noble king, whose son was the wisest of kings, while he himself was one of the best, and bravest, and greatest of men.

Her name was Ruth ; and she lived "when the judges ruled" in the Holy Land. The point of time was about half way between Adam and our own day,—some three thousand years ago.

While she was young, and living in the country east of the Dead Sea, there was once a great want of food at Bethlehem, on the other side of that sea. This city, where Jesus was born, was, for the most part, a place of plenty. The house of bread, is, in truth, the meaning of its name. But some time, while Ruth was young, bread was very scarce at Bethlehem, and we know not how many people had to move away, in order to get food to eat somewhere else. One family—a man and his wife and their two sons—moved to the place of Ruth's home in the land of Moab.

Perhaps they went from Bethlehem by Jerusalem and Jericho, and then, crossing the river Jordan north of the Dead Sea, made their way round on the east side of it. More likely they went the other way from Bethlehem by Hebron, and then around the southern end of the Dead Sea to the east side of it. By some route or other, they all reached the land of Moab safely ; and we may be sure that they were glad to find a place where they need not starve, but could get plenty of bread.

The man's name was Elimelech ; his wife's Naomi. Mahlon and Chilion were the names of their sons. They all made their home some time in the land of Moab, and the sons got married there. Mahlon mar-

ried Ruth, and Chilion married a young woman named Orpah.

For a while they all lived in health and plenty. But they could not live so always. They had got away from the want of bread in Bethlehem ; but they could not flee from the hand of death. His dark shadow fell on their path. He came into the house of Elimelech, and the father died, and his wife was written widow. "She was left and her two sons." This record of her bereavement is the tender and simple memorial made by the Spirit of God.

But death often comes again and again into the same place or the same house. So it was in this case ; "and Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them ; and the widow was left of her two sons and her husband."

Perhaps this stroke was not harder upon the aged mother than upon the young wives of her sons ; but for her it was blow upon blow, causing wave upon wave of sorrow. She felt that she could bear it no longer, to live in the strange land where not one of her own kindred was now left to her, and where, it may be, she could not see or hear one of her own nation.

She was left alone ; and well I remember how a tall and strong man came to my door one day and told me his wife was dead. "Oh ! me," he said, "I am left all alone in the world. I have no wife nor child, no father nor mother, no brother nor sister, on earth." The strong man's voice became thick with grief. He

could say no more. His eyes filled with tears. The big drops fell upon the ground. He stood trembling like one in fear. Sorrow had seized his heart. His lips quivered while he stood speechless, and he knew not what to do.

And great was the grief of the lonely Naomi in the strange land of Moab. Her husband and sons were dead. Her kindred were all gone. Their lifeless forms were hidden in darkness; and her best friends were almost as wretched as herself. See those three widows together—all childless. It was a sad house they made when they came home from the burial of Mahlon and Chilion.

I do not wonder that Naomi wished to go back to her own country. It is often the case, that the older a man grows, the more he loves the place of his birth and of his youthful years. The scenes painted upon the bright eyes of the boy delight the heart of the aged man. The hills and valleys, the streams of water and the stars of night, remain the same, even though men die and many friends of early years already slumber in their graves. They live in memory amid the scenes of their youth.

When therefore Naomi heard that God had shown His goodness to her native land and her own people in giving them bread, she made up her mind to return to Bethlehem. It was sad to leave the graves of her husband and her sons behind her. It was hard to go alone, a poor widow, through all the country from the land of Moab to the home of her youth. But she

loved her country, her people, and her God ; and so she arose to go from the place where she was, to return to the land of Judah.

When she started, Ruth and Orpah set out to go with her. They had learned to love her dearly, and she had taught them the true religion. They had been good wives to her sons, and they were good daughters to her. She loved them in return for all their kindness to her ; but she thought they would expect more from her than she could ever bestow upon them, and so she gave them her advice at once, to go back and live with their own people in the land of Moab. They had friends and kindred there, and she said to each : "Go, return to your mother's house." She prayed that God would bless them, and give them rest in the homes of new husbands. She said : "The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me." Then she gave them the parting kiss.

But they would not leave her. They lifted up their voices and wept. They looked upon her as the mother of the husbands whom they had so dearly loved, and whose memory they still so fondly cherished. They thought to go with their mother-in-law and to live with Naomi in her country. But she feared that they were looking for more from the laws and customs of the Hebrews than they could ever enjoy, and so she urged them again to remain in their own land.

She knew that we ought not to make our friends expect more from us than we can give them. She did not wish them to look for some good which they could

not get. So she told them not to go with her. "And they lifted up their voices and wept again." For the time, their lips spoke not a word, but their eyes rained tears.

Now and then the deepest sorrow finds no heart nor voice to speak. It only weeps, and sighs, and moans, or sits in silence with fixed and tearless eyes.

But after Orpah had clearly seen what Naomi wished, she gave and took the parting kiss. She loved her mother-in-law. She could not part with her without tears. But she also loved her own kindred, her own country, and the gods of her own people. She had brighter prospects in the place of her birth than in the land of Judah; and she was willing to remain.

Does Ruth share her feelings and her choice? The Bible tells us in the most beautiful language: "Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her." This is like the poetic thought of Homer, who speaks of one in earnest prayer as clinging and growing fast to the knees of the gods.

Orpah and Ruth have now shown themselves unlike each other. One went a little way, and then turned back. This shows us the heart of Orpah.

And how often is this the case with those who seem to wish to go forward to heaven. They have some love for the people of God. In times of sorrow or fear, they are willing to go a little way with those who worship Jehovah. But they are not willing to give up all in order to make their way with His

people, and so they soon return to those who worship not the true God.

Naomi would rather start for Bethlehem all alone than set out with one who, on the way, would desire to turn back. She did not wish Ruth to begin the journey, and afterwards regret her choice, and long to return. So she proves her love, and courage, and piety again. She speaks of the example of Orpah, and seems to say : Ruth, you know what I have already said. Should you go with me, I can promise you nothing in this world. Your prospects here are better in your own country, and among the friends of your childhood. See, Orpah thinks so ; and she has already gone back to live in your own land. Does it not seem plain, that you ought to think so too, and retrace your steps ? You had better return with your sister-in-law.

These were strong reasons ; and Ruth had now much more to persuade her to rejoin her own people than Orpah had when she went back.

Sometimes the example of one sister or schoolmate is quite enough to decide the choice and course of another. No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. Whether we live or die, we influence others more or less ; and after Orpah had turned her back upon Naomi, we might expect Ruth to say : My mother, I really know not what to do.. I love you, and would like to go with you. I thought to live with you and sister Orpah as long as we all should live. But now she is gone home, and I cannot be with

you both. What shall I do? If I go with you to Bethlehem, and you should die, I should be a stranger, alone and friendless, there. Perhaps I had better retrace my steps after Orpah.

It would have been all natural for Ruth to speak and act in this way. But what did she say and do? With clear foresight, and hearty love, and full purpose, and true faith she said: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

There was need to speak not another word. Ruth had made a choice not to be changed. Her name would not be written in water. It would outlast the rock. Her great-grandson would be the Psalmist and Sovereign of Israel—the forefather of Jesus, the Saviour of men.

No wonder that now "when Naomi saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem."

Ruth was not to be turned back on the way any more than Naomi. She had counted the cost. She had made up her mind. She would have a part in her mother-in-law's company, people, and God. She even wished to share her mother's grave. She is not so much in love with her mother's beauty, riches, or

sons. Once, these may have been lovely, and Ruth may have greatly prized them. But now, they are all withered and gone ; and she loves a better portion in their place. She loves her mother's wisdom, kindness, piety, and grace so much that she loves all that belongs to her mother.

Our religion should make us lovely ; and our loveliness should be so great and persuasive as to cause others to love our religion and our God. In this way we should make them willing to go with us, as Ruth clave to Naomi. She was ready to journey with her mother-in-law, perhaps on foot, from land to land. She was more than willing to go and live with her in a strange country.

Are we daily making our friends wish more and more that they may live with us in "the land which is very far off,"—"in the home beyond the tide?" Do we daily show such zeal for God as to make others think Him most lovely, and fill them with eagerness to serve Him? Are we mindful that death may soon part us from our friends, and that whatever we can do for their good must be done quickly? To-morrow they or we may die.

When Naomi reached Bethlehem she seemed to the women there almost like one raised from the dead ; and while the men were busy in the field making the harvest, the women kept coming from their homes to see the strangers, and one after another said : "Is this Naomi?"

She had been away so long, or she was so much

changed, or they were so glad to see her, that they could hardly believe their eyes. Perhaps *this* was the reason : they loved her so much, that they thought her return almost too good to be true. Yet if they were so glad to see her, I should think they might have done more for her support and comfort than they seem to have done. But there are not a few who are wont to show love and kindness in words which cost nothing.

It may be that Naomi and Ruth were not willing to take bread from others without earning it, even though Naomi thought herself in a sad case. She said : " Call me not Naomi," that is, Sweetness. " Call me Mara," that is, Bitterness. For " I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me ?"

It was now the time for Ruth to fulfil her word, and to show that she would share the condition and the cares, as well as the company and comforts of her mother-in-law : and nobly did she keep her promise. She did not shrink from the hardest toil, in order to help Naomi ; nor did she fail in any duty, but closely following at every step the laws and customs of the Hebrews, she was in due time happily married again to a rich kinsman of her former husband. And when she became the mother of a son, the women said unto Naomi : " Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer

of thy life, and a nourisher of thy old age ; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors, gave it a name, saying, There is a son borne to Naomi ; and they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Thus ends the book of Ruth ; and when the Spirit of God inspired some pious man to write it—perhaps Samuel—and to put it among the Holy Scriptures which make the Bible, He had doubtless more than one object in view.

It is plain that the readers of other books of the Bible would wish to know the ancestry of David, as all his countrymen, in his own day, would desire to know it. So it is given here, in connection with the story of a person most charming for affection, decision, industry and piety, though not born among the chosen people, and having no birthright in their special covenant and promises. It is a story of so much tenderness and beauty as to be evermore delightful. The conduct of Ruth towards Boaz might not be free from blame in our day and country. But it is perfectly plain that she acted according to the best advice, and agreeably to the laws and customs of the land and age in which she lived. Thus she enjoyed the love and approbation of the pious and prudent Naomi, and won the confidence and affection of the rich and honorable Boaz.

The Spirit of God also thought fit, through this book, to make known that the ancestry of David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, came from heathen as well as Jewish stock. Hence the line of David is traced back through Boaz to Pharez, whose ancestry was no better than Ruth's. Thus it is seen that the Messiah is kindred to Gentiles as well as Jews, and all may infer on this ground that the benefits of His mediation should extend to all mankind. The chosen people may not claim an exclusive interest in the blessings of His life and death, inasmuch as the blood of Heathens as well as Hebrews must flow through His veins, and in due time pour forth from His wounds for the redemption of all.

The story of Ruth shows that the laws of Moses were in full force "when the Judges ruled." Both the gleanings and marriage of Ruth afford the best proof that these laws were most carefully kept even in the smallest matters. The corners of the field and the gleanings of the harvest were left for the poor and stranger. The elders of Bethlehem sat in the public place to administer the laws. Boaz had to take every legal step before he could marry Ruth in the lifetime of a nearer kinsman of her former husband. Thus the story of Ruth discloses those peaceful and orderly features of the times which the Book of Judges was not designed to unfold. It thus disproves beforehand an objection to the Bible made even in our day.

It reveals the piety of the people in those times. The citizens of Bethlehem seem to live in the atmo-

sphere of godliness. The features of this beautiful prospect are unlike the views which we see in the Book of Judges. There we learn how the people sinned and suffered for it, till repentance and forgiveness brought relief. Hence we behold very dark pictures there. But here we see the most beautiful manifestations of true religion. The life of the household and the labors of the field, as well as the affections of the family and the formalities of legal transactions, are all tempered and turned heavenward by the grace of piety. Godliness marks every aspect of society; and all our progress in these days has not supplied our need of some of the virtues which the life and the book of Ruth reveal as common in Bethlehem three thousand years ago.

Perhaps the Spirit of God, through this story of Ruth, would teach us how to write some parts of history. For how shall we learn what we wish to know—how people generally live, and why they act as they do—unless we can see them in their homes, in their fields, in their shops, in the streets of their cities and towns, and in the many other places of their labor, rest, recreation and worship? What can we know of the life of a people unless we understand much more than the waging of wars and the plotting of parties? All the generals who have won stars in the war of the great rebellion are not one among ten thousand of the men whose lives form the chief part of our national history for the last half century. Here is a book which gives us a bright vision of household peace and

love—such peace and love as may be in a million households of our own country—and Ruth herself wears all the charms of a young woman saintly in virtue.

Who would not follow her example in choosing the fellowship of God's people and the worship and service of Jehovah? Manifestly her choice of Naomi's company was not made from mere love of her kind mother-in-law. Very plainly it was in part from her interest in the true religion. After Orpah had "gone back unto her people, and unto her gods," Ruth said: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." She forsook her own idolatrous people, and made her abode among the Hebrews. She abandoned the service of false gods, and embraced the worship of Jehovah. She called God to witness that this was her choice forever. "The Lord do so to me and more also." These words sealed her vow. Thus she gave herself "to trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel."

Orpah made no such choice of the true religion. She sought her pleasure and welfare among no true and devout worshipers of the living God. Thus the two daughters-in-law of Naomi represent two unlike classes of persons. Some put their trust in God. They make Him their chief good, and His people their people, whatever may come. They trust under the wings of the God of Israel, let what will happen—though the heavens fall. They make His people their people in life and death. They wish, and plan and

purpose to dwell with them forever. But there is another class who are like Orpah. They go a little way, perhaps, toward the promised land. They have a natural love for the people of God. They feel the ties of kindred. They esteem the purer taste and the real virtue of the godly. But they do not devote themselves wholly to Immanuel.

There are many ties which bind these backward persons to the people of God, and His faithful servants and zealous worshipers love them dearly and seek their good. Naomi loved both of her daughters, and she was glad to have Ruth go with her as soon as this lovely woman of Moab was ready to bear her company from the right motive and for the right end. And in the same way the people of God now greatly desire all their reluctant friends to journey with them to that Promised Land which is the Better Land.

But if you have only a natural attachment to God's people—if you are seeking with them or from them merely some present good—if you think of joining them for a time only—then they must say to you: Think what you do. Before you set out with us, count the cost. Return to your own people rather than expect what you will never find with us. Join not our company unless you can unite yourself to God and His people by a choice and an act which you will never regret. We wish you to go with us; but we desire you to do it with all your heart. We do not want to journey with those who will turn back in the day of trial. We wish those for company whose heart

will last till the end of the way. Should others forsake us, we wish to feel sure that you will never leave us. If your whole soul is in it, then join us. We will gladly have you with us as soon as you heartily say : "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go ; and where thou lodgest I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Do you say this with all your heart to each one of God's people ? Then with joy they call you Ruth, that is, companion, friend ; and they say : You shall go with us ; and though the way may be rough, and weary days may be our lot for a while, yet we know it shall be well at last and in the end,

Ruth did not regret her choice. She went forward in the path of duty and piety. Thus the charming loveliness of her natural character became all the more attractive through the sterling virtues of religion. In this way she reached such a position that her name is forever joined to the name of Israel's sweetest singer, greatest poet, and noblest king. In this way she has caused the simple story of her life to pour comfort and peace into millions of hearts in every age for thousands of years. In this way she has moved how many souls to gentle deeds of virtue and holy acts of religion !

Who would not rather be Ruth than Orpah ? Who

would wish their history to end with a return to heathen people and to idol gods? Ruth became the mother of Obed ; and his name reminds one of Queen Victoria's oldest son, whose motto is "*Ich dien*"—I serve. This has been the motto of the Prince of Wales ever since Edward the Black Prince captured the crest of King John of Bohemia, who was killed in the battle where he wore it—on the field of Crecy, August 26, 1346. "I serve" is therefore always the sentiment of the oldest son of the Sovereign of Great Britain ; and "servant" is the very name of the son of Ruth. Should not every son of a pious mother be the servant of Christ ; and every daughter, like the Holy Virgin, own herself the handmaid of the Lord ? Should not every young person make the wise choice, and live the holy life of Ruth ?

XIII.

Jezebel.

"An ill woman could not be called by a worse name than hers."—
MATTHEW HENRY.

"**D**AUGHTER of a race of kings, wife of a king, and mother of two kings," says Dr. Anderson, speaking of Keopuolani, "her person was regarded as peculiarly sacred. There were times when no one might see her; and when she walked abroad at the close of the day—her usual time—whoever saw her fell prostrate to the earth." Yet her relationship to kings was not equal to Jezebel's. For Jezebel was the daughter, wife, mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother of kings. Her father Ethbaal, her husband Ahab, her sons Ahaziah and Joram, her son-in-law Jehoram, and her grandson Ahaziah were all kings; and she outlived them all.

To understand the life of this queenly and powerful woman, and the lessons which it teaches, we need to bear in mind when and where she lived and died. This will help us to see why she was not as lovely and good as she was august and queenly.

We cannot fail to admire her dignity, her power,

and her courage; and we know that her activity, energy, and spirit were very great. If she had been well taught and trained, in her childhood and youth, by wise and pious parents and teachers, and had grown up among kindly and godly companions, I have often thought that in her later years she would have been a splendid woman, a faithful wife, a good mother, a noble queen, and a wise counsellor, to grace the palace, and to bless the people of any king whose life might be in union with her own. But the years of her girlhood were spent among superstitious and cruel idolaters.

She was born about two thousand eight hundred years ago. It was, as many think, in the lifetime of Homer, the greatest of the Greek poets. The times were not then very peaceful, at least in those parts of the world which are best known to us.

There is a great sea between Europe on the north, Asia on the east, and Africa on the south. Because it has three of the chief parts of the world around it, we call it the sea between the lands. It was on the eastern shore of this sea, in the great part of the world called Asia, that Jezebel spent the years of her girlhood. The name of the country in which she lived was Phoenice, and her home was in the city of Sidon. Her father was the king of that country, and his royal palace was in its chief city. His name was Ethbaal. We sometimes call it Ithobal, just as Jezebel is sometimes called Isabel.

The city in which she lived is more than three thousand years old. It is built on the northwest slope

of a high point of land and, rocks which run out towards the southwest into the sea. On the highest ground, and near the very point, is the citadel. A low ridge of rocks runs along in the sea in front of the city. This ridge is a natural breakwater; and even earlier than the girlhood of Jezebel, more ships were found in the harbor which it makes, than in any other part of the world at the time. On the landward side of the city, the most beautiful gardens and orchards fill the plain all the way back to the hills, which are not very far off. Farther away, never failing streams come down from the mountains, and refresh the plain, and supply all the wants of the city with water as pure as the Croton. Here grow the finest pomegranates, apricots, figs, almonds, oranges, lemons, plums, peaches, cherries, and bananas. The vine also flourishes. It was in this place—then a large city, full of business and wealth—that Jezebel spent the youthful years of her life. She lived in the royal palace of her father, who was the monarch of the city and of all the country round for many miles.

Sidon is the oldest of all the cities of Phœnice, and the metropolis or mother-city of Tyre. Three thousand years ago the home of Jezebel was the most famous city in the world for commerce and the arts, and most of all for the fine arts. When Homer describes the richest silver-ware and the richest clothing, he says they were well wrought by the best of all artists, the men and the women of Zidon. The city was then what Paris is now, as to the culture and commerce

of the fine arts ; and little Jezebel was the beautiful daughter of the king, and had such a place among the people of the world as a daughter of Louis Napoleon would now hold in the capital of France. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of persons would wish to know every spring and autumn even the style of her dress. Doubtless she had the richest works of art, and the most costly clothing, in great plenty ; for her father was the chief man of the wealthiest city of the world.

When the children of Israel marched into Canaan, that is, the Netherlands or Lowlands along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, as we read in the Bible, Zidon was a great city. It was too great for them to conquer. They could not subdue it. But we read, in the Book of Judges, that when the people of Zidon oppressed the people of God, more than three thousand years ago, He heard the cry of His people, and delivered them out of the hands of the Zidonians. In later days, when Solomon built the temple, and again when Ezra built it anew, the one as well as the other had to go to the city of Zidon for the best timber and for the best builders. There were no other artizans and architects anywhere equal to the Zidonians—none who could do the rich and fine work suitable for the house of God in so skillful a manner.

Even in the time of our Lord, as Strabo said, the people of Zidon had great skill in philosophy, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, navigation, and all the liberal arts. It would be interesting to trace the

history of the city for the last two thousand years, and to speak of the American missionaries who are now there to teach the people the true religion and the way of life in Jesus Christ ; but, as the home of Jezebel, we must speak of it as it was nearly a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

Then it was sending its ships, and its merchants, and its teachers, and its fashions, and its letters, and its rich and costly goods to all the chief ports of the vast sea that lies between Europe, and Asia, and Africa. It was not only at the head of the world for commerce, and wealth, and fine arts ; but it was also famous for the luxury and the vices which so often follow in the footsteps of great prosperity and riches.

We may, therefore, plainly see that in the condition of Jezebel's home, and in the character of her native city, there was much to make her proud and haughty, and willful and wicked, as well as ambitious, tasteful and queenly.

We should also bear in mind, that in her youth she was not taught to worship the true God. She was early trained to bow down to idols—to worship Baal. The name of this idol was a part of her father's name, as well as Hannibal's, Hasdrubal's and many others among the people of Phœnice, Carthage and other countries which the Phœnicians conquered and made their own.

It would not be easy to make most persons in Christian countries understand how very wicked and cruel was the worship of Baal, in which Jezebel was early

trained. The Bible speaks of the altars, images and temples built to this bloody idol. The altars, for the most part, were set up on high places, such as the tops of houses and mountains ; for the people thought that Baal had something to do with the sun, and so they built their altars on high places, that the first rays of the sun at his rising, and the last rays at his setting, might shine on them.

The priests of the idols were very many, and doubtless they had their full share in teaching and training Jezebel to the idolatry and pride which made her womanhood so imperious and so cruel. In their idol-worship, they often burned incense, and also oxen in sacrifice. But this was not all. For see what God said to the people of Jerusalem, who once turned away from Him to worship this idol, so that the Lord declared : "I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken Me, and have estranged this place, and have burnt incense in it to other gods," "and have filled this place with the blood of innocents. They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal."

The conduct of the priests in their contest with Elijah on Mount Carmel shows the character of their worship. They called for fire to come down from heaven, but it came not. Then they danced around the altar, and cut themselves with knives after their manner, till the blood flowed, as the priests of Bellona did, at a later day, among the idolatrous Romans.

Doubtless it was in this bloody idol-worship that young Jezebel was fitted to become the bold, willful, imperious and cruel queen. Her conduct to the last was in keeping with her education. We may well believe that the spirit of her father's palace, city and religion ruled her heart throughout her whole life. Most persons walk in the way they are taught to go ; and why should we think it was otherwise with Jezebel ? Knowing the period and city of her youth, we know also the religion which was taught her. It was not the religion of the Bible. It was the sanguinary idolatry of Baal. And having grown up in it from youth to womanhood, she was ready to show forth the character of her religion, as well as her own haughty and resolute spirit.

In due time, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, became known as the queen of Ahab, king of Israel. The proper capital of the Israelite kingdom was the city of Samaria. This was a beautiful place ; but for some reason, Ahab and his house often chose to live in the royal palace at Jezreel, some twenty-five miles north of Samaria. It is a common practice of royal personages in these days to make their abode, now and then, beyond the limits of the capital. The sovereigns of France and England do it every year, as Ahab and Jezebel did thousands of years ago. Yet the city of Samaria had a most delightful situation, on high ground, with a deep and fertile soil. Indeed, the whole kingdom had no other place of so much strength, fertility and beauty. In all these points it had very

greatly the advantage over Jerusalem. The site of the city is almost a mountain, in the midst of a great basin many miles wide. The ground on every side of it, some miles away, rises into real mountains. A low ridge connects these on the east with the site of the city ; and all around it, wherever the hand of culture is active, the whole prospect smiles. This picturesque and attractive place became the home of Jezebel after her marriage ; but we may very well doubt whether the ocean and the mountain prospects of her childhood's home, or the hill and valley scenery of her present abode, had any great charms for the ambitious queen. Her father-in-law had built the city for the capital of the country over which his sword had made him the monarch. In him the conqueror seems to have been less wicked than the king. But he could not ruin the country in one short reign, and so he left the kingdom and its new capital as a royal possession to his son, Ahab, the husband of Jezebel. Very likely it was due to his wickedness that Ahab became the husband of a wife so wicked and cruel ; for he seems to have been just such a man as would be glad to see his son marry a young woman of Jezebel's ambitious character and royal connections. Who can doubt that he thought it a splendid match ? Was she not the daughter of a king ? and such a king ! She was the royal princess of Zidon ! The world could not show another like her—rich, royal and radiant in beauty, and as bold as beautiful. She was from head to foot a queen !

Why should he care about her wickedness of heart

and her religion of Baal? He knew not that she would do evil till the very last day of her life, then be hurled from a window like a robber or an assassin, die a shameful death and become the food of dogs beneath the shadow of the royal palace. Yet her death was the proper end of her cruel and bloody life. God thought so, and He knows best.

It may be that the guilt of making such a woman queen must rest upon Ahab only. It is plain that he suffered her to lead him into the greatest wickedness. As soon as she became his queen, he began to build an idol-temple in his capital of Samaria. It stood there till Jehu tore it down. But the altar of Baal which she caused him to set up there was not the only deed of evil which he wrought through her idolatrous leadership. He went on from bad to worse till he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

It was while he and his idolatrous queen were in their full career of wickedness, that one whom they did not expect came forth to confront them. Elijah appears before them as though he had just alighted from that chariot of fire which afterwards conveyed him from earth to heaven. He hurls his warnings into their very faces, like flaming thunderbolts; and with a most solemn oath he assures them that they should see neither rain nor dew upon their whole land for years—that Jehovah would thus punish them for their wickedness.

Did they fear and tremble and turn from their evil

ways? It was not in Jezebel's heart to do it. She would worship Baal, and defy the living God. She set it in her heart to put every prophet of the Lord to death. Perhaps she might have done it, to the full extent of her purpose, had not the good Obadiah hid a hundred and fifty in a cave and fed them with bread and water. The most powerful cannot always accomplish all the wickedness which their hearts desire and devise. The weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Elijah therefore came forth again, and said to the husband of Jezebel : "I have not troubled Israel ; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." The prophet would go up to the very heights of Mount Carmel, as near to Baal as possible, and there appeal to the test of fire from heaven, as to the guilty person, who was the troubler of the country. The priests of Baal could not do otherwise than stand the test. The worshipers of the idol thought that he had control over the sun. They prayed to him to send down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice which they had laid upon his altar ; but they could not prevail. When they had utterly failed, Elijah soon performed the miracle in the name of Jehovah, and then called on all the people to serve God. By the same authority, he gave commandment that the priests of Baal should be put to death for their great wickedness. Then he said that God would soon send plenty of rain ; and so it came to pass.

But was Jezebel grateful to God because He had now once more given rain, after three years and a half of drought, in which not a shower had fallen from the sky, nor a dew-drop formed upon the ground? One might think that she would now forsake Baal and worship the true God. Not she! It is not in her heart to forego the religion of her father and all her family—the religion which she has learned and cherished in her childhood and youth. So far from rejecting it, she is exceedingly angry at God and Elijah because the wicked priests of Baal have been put to death; and she sends a message to the prophet and says to him: “The gods do so to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow at this time.”

Thus she drove Elijah out of the country which he had just made fruitful again, and compelled him to flee for his life into the wilderness. There he became so wretched in his exile that he wished to die, as in his loneliness he thought of the idolatry and misery of his native land; for Jezebel had left, in all the country, but seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And this was not the whole of her wickedness.

There was in the country a man whose name was Naboth. He lived in Jezreel, and owned there a vineyard which he had no right to sell. It was near the palace of Ahab, and the king wanted to make a garden of it for himself. So he offered to buy it. But Naboth told him it could not be lawfully sold, and on this account the king could not have it.

Now Ahab was very unreasonable and selfish in the matter ; for we may be sure that he had a stately palace and beautiful grounds already ; and near at hand and far away the scenery was charming ; for Jezreel was built on high ground and had a wide and noble view. On the northeast, beyond a wide and deep valley, is Mount Hermon. On the southeast and near at hand is Mount Gilboa. Between these two mountains, and down the beautiful valley, the prospect reaches to the river Jordan and the eastern mountains beyond it. Perhaps, from the higher parts of the palace, Jezebel could here see the silver gleam of the river, to compensate, in some measure, for the broader water views from her native city. On the west from Jezreel a great level plain many miles wide extends across to the foot of Mount Carmel, and so, in that direction, "the excellency of Carmel" is in full sight. Farther north is the sea, washing the foot of Carmel in the northwest, and towards the rising sun is all the beauty which springs from the fountain of Jezreel.

Thus Ahab had a most charming site there for his royal palace. But now he could take no pleasure in it because Naboth had said to him, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. So the king, like a sulky child, threw himself down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat nothing. Then Jezebel his wife came to him and said : Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread ? So he told her. Then she asked him whether he were the king of Israel or not, and told him that he need not trouble

himself about the vineyard—she would give it to him. Therefore, with her usual boldness and wickedness, she forthwith wrote letters in the king's name, and sealed them with his seal, commanding the elders and nobles of the city to find false witnesses who would swear that Naboth was guilty of a crime to be punished with death, and then to stone him without the city till he should die.

All these unjust and cruel things were done. Then they sent word to Jezebel, saying: Naboth is stoned and is dead. Directly she goes to Ahab and says: Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. As soon as Ahab heard that, he arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth to take possession of it. But after all this wickedness and murder to obtain it, he could not get it even now quite so easily as he at length thought he would.

God sometimes lays a check upon the wicked just where they do not expect it, as He caused the nation's flag to seize the spur of the President's assassin, and bring him down to his knees wounded. He always sees them. They cannot escape His eye. They will not escape His hand forever. He knows how to cross the path of every sinner as surely as He met with all sternness these royal transgressors.

He told Elijah to go and meet Ahab and say to him: Hast thou killed and also taken possession? In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. Then Ahab said to

Elijah : Hast thou found me, O mine enemy ? And he replied : I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. And thus it came to pass. For under the lead of Jezebel his wife, Ahab did very abominably in following idols like the Amorites whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. He did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

He was wickedly weak while his wife was wickedly strong. This appeared on many occasions. Especially did the close of their lives, as we may see, and as the facts often fall in such cases, most clearly illustrate this diversity in their common wicked character.

He went into battle against the king of Syria, and disguised himself so that the enemy might not know him, though not in his wife's dress ; but a soldier drew a bow at a venture and smote him between the joints of his armor, so that he died the same day at evening, and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of his chariot. So the king died, and when he was brought to Samaria, they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (and they washed his armor), according unto the word of the Lord.

Thus the husband of Jezebel died in his cowardly

disguise, and was buried with the stain of his blood upon him, and doubtless went to his own place, as one who had forsaken the true God, and taught his people to sin in all the cruelties of idolatry. His son Ahaziah reigned in his stead, and so the wicked influence of Jezebel continued ; for Ahaziah reigned two years over Israel, and did evil all the time. He walked in the way of his father and mother, just as we may commonly expect a son to walk. He served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done ; and when he fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was at Samaria, and was sick, he sent to another country to inquire of Baalzebub whether he should recover of his disease. But Elijah sent back his messenger, and sent him word that he should never get well because he had sent to inquire of Baalzebub. Then Ahaziah tried to make Elijah a prisoner, and sent a captain and fifty soldiers to take him. But the prophet called down fire from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty. Then the same thing was done a second time. The third captain, who was sent with the third fifty, asked the prophet to spare his life ; and so he did, and went with him to the king, and told the king that for his worship of Baal he must die. So the king died. God does not think it a light thing for men to forsake His own worship. He made the world and all men in it for Himself ; and He will no more hold our neglect of His worship guiltless than He did Ahaziah's.

After the death of Ahaziah, another son of Jezebel became the king of Israel. This was Joram ; and the influence of his idolatrous mother over him was very hurtful, though he seems to have followed her less closely than his brother had done. But he reigned no more than five years before she extended her malign power more widely through her son-in-law Jehoram who became king of Judah. He did evil like the house of Ahab, for his wife was Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel—a cruel offspring of a most cruel mother—for she murdered I know not how many of her grandsons in order that she might reign as queen herself. Afterwards she sought to save her own life by the cry of Treason ! treason ! against others. But it was all in vain. Having caused much wickedness, idolatry and bloodshed, she herself died at length a violent death, like as her father, and mother, and son and brother had died before her. Her son Ahaziah, her predecessor on the throne, and her brother Joram, and her mother Jezebel were all killed in one day.

It came to pass on this wise—Jezebel's son, the king of Israel, was suffering at Jezreel from a wound, and her grandson, the king of Judah, went down thither to see him. Jezebel herself was there also. While they were all together, God sent to Jehu and anointed him King of Israel, and said unto him : Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel, and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of

Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. Jehu, therefore, immediately set out to do the work of the Lord, and drove furiously towards Jezreel. When it became certainly known there that he was coming, King Joram said: Make ready! The men of war gathered in haste, and the King of Israel, the son of Jezebel, and the King of Judah, the grandson of Jezebel, went out each in his own war-chariot to meet Jehu; and having more of the spirit of the courageous Jezebel than of the cowardly Ahab, they encountered their impetuous foe in the portion of Naboth. But now Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Joram between his arms; and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. Then said Jehu to Bidkar, his captain: Take him up and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth, and thus fulfill the word of the Lord. And so it was done. Now when the King of Judah saw that his uncle was slain, he fled. But Jehu pursued him, and said: Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the Lion's Ascent, which is by Ibleam. But he fled to the Megiddo, and died there, not many miles westward of Jezreel. So the grandson of Jezebel, the King of Judah, died that day, as well as her own son, the King of Israel. But the work of God's avenger was not yet complete. He therefore pressed forward to the city which contained the wicked Jezebel, the mother of such an evil brood. And now her conduct was not meek, and gentle, and submissive. It was bold, and grand, and defiant. She made one last great effort to

meet and subdue a mighty foe by the force of her own royal looks and words. She doubtless knew that Jehu had already pierced the heart of her son, the king. Perhaps she knew the fate of her royal grandson also. But even yet she would not submit. On the contrary, she would essay, in her own person, to subdue the victorious warrior, and by her own queenly air and impressive warning, fill even the heart of the furious Jehu with the dread of Zimri's untimely end—a rebel's doom. She did not succeed. But it was grand in her to make the effort. It was manifestly her last and greatest stake, and she threw her all upon it. She did not tear her hair in grief and anguish over the death of her son and grandson—the kings now lying in their blood. She did not retire into a dark chamber and hide herself from the public view. She robed herself in the richest apparel. She made herself look most queenly. Then she took her place in full sight of the people, and waited the coming of the chief whose own right arm had driven the fatal shaft through the very heart of her kingly son. She would meet him face to face, and give him sternest warning. Thus she would do her utmost to make her own royal speech and aspect disarm him. Alas for her! He was God's minister, and so too strong for all her queenly fascinations! She could not subdue him. She was rudely and treacherously hurled from the palace-window where she had waited for his coming, and whence she darted the flash of her eye and words of menace when he came. The men she

trusted failed her. The very servants of her household proved false. In the decisive hour they did not maintain her royalty inviolate, but threw her, like a dead and worthless animal, to the dogs.

Her shameful fate shows us that the arm of man may fail us in the very moment of our greatest need—that we may find a foe just where we expect a friend—and that a wicked life of prosperity may come to a dreadful end of ruin even in this world. How great may be the change of an hour!

For when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. Her courage never failed her. She sustained herself in her august position to the last, and when Jehu came into the city she was at the royal palace to meet him and warn him against his violent course. She said to him: Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? But she could not intimidate the Lord's anointed. Her own hour had come to fall and die. Her queenly presence could not overawe the Lord's avenger, and her threatening words fell upon his ear as empty air. He merely looked up at the window and said: Who is on my side? Who? Then two or three of Jezebel's servants looked out to him, and he said: Throw her down; and they threw her down. And some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses; and he trode her under foot. But after he had taken possession of the city, and refreshed himself with food and drink, he gave orders to bury her, because she was a

king's daughter. And they went to bury her ; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of the hands. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord, saying : " In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel : and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." These are the last words of the Holy Book that contain her name. Behold the end of the wicked !

Her royal birth, her great talents, her superior advantages, her queenly position, her power over kings, her stately presence, her boldness, her spirit could not save her at last from the proper punishment of her wicked deeds. The just judgments of God for her sins came upon her in due time. The delicate painting on her cheeks and eyebrows ; the rich tire on her head ; the royal robes she wore ; and her proud air and foreboding words could not save her queenly form from the sharp teeth of the fierce scavengers of eastern cities. What could save her soul from the punishment justly due to all her sins and crimes ?

It is not likely that our bodies will ever become the food of dogs and devouring birds. But it is certain that the sins of all who persevere in wickedness will sooner or later bring punishment upon them. This world shows us enough to warn us against the retributions of the world to come. Even the courageous and queenly Jezebel could not escape. How then shall our sins forever elude the vengeance of Jehovah ?