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- ART. I.—1. *Cours de Littérature Française*. Par M. Villemain, Pair de France, Membre de l'Académie Française. Tableau de la littérature au Moyen Age, en France, en Italie, en Espagne, et en Angleterre. 3me édition. Paris, 1841. 2 tomes, 8vo.
2. *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche*. Von Dr. August Neander. Fünften Bandes Zweite Abtheilung. Hamburg, 1845.

THIS new volume of Neander gives us occasion to say a little about the school-divinity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and in attempting this, we must premise that it will be impossible, without such an admixture of bad Latin with our English, as cannot fail to be annoying to those squeamish persons, who are troubled at ancient quotations. The truth is, every new science makes its own language, and the schoolmen made a Latinity which would have been to Varro or Cæsar what Scotch dialect is to us. We may, perhaps, be allowed to say a little on this point—the decay of Latinity—before proceeding to our principal topic.

Taking M. Villemain as our guide, then, we observe that the classic Latin was difficult, even for those who spoke it, and this gave rise to many treatises on grammar. When this language spread itself everywhere, with the conquests of

ART. IV.—*Principles of the Interior or Hidden Life, designed particularly for the consideration of those who are seeking assurance of faith and perfect love.* By Thomas C. Upham. Third edition. Boston. Waite, Pierce & Co. 1845.

THAT the book on the Interior Life is seeing its third edition, is evidence that many Christian people have felt some interest in its contents; and we doubt not that all who have read it with serious and candid minds, have derived benefit from it. The work is full of decided and impressive signs of an enlightened understanding and a pious heart. As an effusion of a devout mind, it awakens sympathy with the author in other devout minds, and is one of a sort of instruments by which the spirit of Christ may be excited and nourished in his people.

The great variety of forms under which the principles of religious experience are discussed, affords ample opportunity for observing the diversity of gifts in writers, and the diversity of aspects which the same religious experience assumes in the lives of believers. The spirit of true religion is one. The forms of thought and action in which this spirit may find expression, are innumerable. The thoughts of pious writers are, for the most part, arranged and presented for other purposes than merely to give expression to their piety; and hence it comes to pass that the selection and arrangement of the intellectual views which are employed to conduct the devout emotions of one mind to others, will be as various as the aims of the different writers. Every one hath a doctrine, hath a psalm, hath a revelation. The doctrine of one may, only with great difficulty, be reconciled with the doctrine of another. The psalm of one may harmonize ill with that of another. The revelation of one may have a very obscure logical consistency with the revelation of another; while the inward, hidden experience of all, considered apart from the intellectual forms in which that experience presents itself as an object of thought and of discussion, may not be essentially various. Faith, in different minds, may have a leading apprehension of different features of the character of God, and still be, in all those minds, in its spiritual nature the same; equally pure, and equally efficacious towards salvation. There are doctrines of the scriptures

which may be variously received and expressed by different persons, and still do their proper work by giving intelligent exercise to faith, as an element of the spiritual life in the soul. In this matter the great truth which must possess the minds of all believers as the foundation of Christian charity is this: that all their exercises of thought and forms of expression are diverse phenomena, put forth, in different circumstances by the same principle of life.

This truth claims the habitual consideration of Christians. It pervades all the instructions of the gospel. Forbid not him who casteth out devils in the name of Jesus, though he may not follow with us. This sentiment has as bold and decisive expression in the scriptures as any other portion of the mind of God. Every true Christian learns it from the Holy Spirit which dwells in his own heart. It is acceptable, in theory, among all professed believers; and is only when under the dominion of false and pernicious reasonings, that the true Christian can endure the contraction of bigotry.

In the book before us we have a discussion of religious experience presented in a form intentionally peculiar. The writer has his theological object distinctly before him throughout. The work is the offspring of patient and intense reflection, and gives on every page, abundant proof of a habit of discriminating thought. Its air of scientific precision makes the reader suspect his author of a somewhat presumptuous confidence in the accuracy and utility of his views. From the title page itself we learn that the author writes for the particular benefit of "those who are seeking assurance of faith and perfect love." And although we have no design of shaping this article into a formal examination and refutation of the system of perfectionism, we promise our readers a few plain thoughts which, in our judgment, are worthy of the serious regard of Christian writers as to the tendency and the value of all this sort of speculation on the subject of religious experience.

"That man," says Jeremy Taylor, "does certainly belong to God, who believes and is baptised into all the articles of the Christian faith, and studies to improve his knowledge in the matters of God, so as may best make him to live a holy life; 2. Who, in obedience to Christ, worships God diligently, frequently and constantly, with natural religion, that is, of prayer,

praises and thanksgiving ; 3. Who takes all opportunities to remember Christ's death, by frequent sacrament as it can be had, or else by inward acts of understanding, will and memory, which as the spiritual communion, supplies the want of the external rite ; 4. Who lives chastely ; 5. and is merciful ; 6. and despises the world, using it as a man, but never suffering it to rifle a duty ; 7. and is just in his dealing and diligent in his calling ; 8. He that is humble in spirit ; 9. and obedient to government ; 10. and content in his fortune and employment ; 11. He that does his duty because he loves God ; 12. and especially, if, after all this, he be afflicted and patient, or prepared to suffer affliction for the cause of God. The man that hath these twelve signs of grace and predestination, does as certainly belong to God, and is his son, as surely as he is his creature." These twelve signs of true religion are, all except the eleventh, outward duties of the Christian, which indicate to the view of men, the religion which reigns in the soul. But they are no part of the religion itself. The eleventh refers to the love of God, as the motive to all duty ; the comprehensive element, the sum of religion in the heart.

We have here one of the forms adopted by an eminently intelligent man to express the evidence of a true religious experience. It is a form which strikes every one as proper for the purposes of religious instruction. It appeals to outward acts, palpable, intelligible, the natural fruit of the inward quality of the mind. It expands and divides into numerous particulars, the concise definition of pure religion and undefiled, given by the apostle James : "To visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The remarkably diffuse and extended analysis of the religious affections, by President Edwards, affords an illustrious instance of what may be expected from a mind of unusual clearness and penetration, when employed upon the physiological distinctions of spiritual phenomena. It will detract nothing from the good influence of the book as an instrument of edification for the pious reader, a book which bears on every page the fruit of the extraordinary spiritual intelligence and glowing piety for which the author was distinguished, and which has embalmed his memory in the hearts of so many of

the friends of truth and goodness, if to serve our present purpose, we examine here his twelve non-signs, and his twelve signs of true religious affections, and state our ground of doubt in relation to their practical utility.

As to the first;—it is no sign of gracious affections, 1. That they are very great and are raised very high; 2. That they have great effects upon the body; 3. That they cause fluent, fervent, and abundant talking of the things of religion; 4. That persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, or by their own strength; 5. That they come with texts of scripture remarkably brought to the mind; 6. That there is an appearance of love in them; 7. That there are many kinds of religious affections accompanying one another; 8. That comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience in a certain order; 9. That they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship; 10. That they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God; 11. That they make persons who have them exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate; and 12. That the outward manifestations of them, and the relations persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity and win their hearts.

As to those signs which President Edwards gives as decisive, they are these: 1. That they arise from those influences and operations on the heart which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine; 2. That they have regard to the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are in themselves; and not any conceived relation they bear to self or to self-interest; 3. That they be primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things; or, to express it otherwise, a love to divine things, for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections; 4. That they do arise from the mind's being enlightened, richly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things; 5. That they be attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things; 6. That they be attended with evangelical humiliation; 7. That they are attend-

ed with a change of nature ; 8. That they tend to, and are attended with the lamb-like and dove-like spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, or in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, quietness, forgiveness, and mercy, as appeared in Christ ; 9. That they soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit ; 10. That they have beautiful symmetry and proportion ; 11. That the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased, while, on the contrary, false affections rest satisfied in themselves ; and 12. That they have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice ; that is, that they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them ; that they cause that a practice which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules, should be the practice and business of his life.

As we pass to the remark for the sake of which this list of signs has been quoted, we will notice, what the reader will see by a moment's inspection, the extreme logical and metaphysical defect of the series. There is evidently no reason why such an enumeration of signs of gracious affection should stop at twelve, or at twelve times twelve. Such distinctions and propositions may be indefinitely multiplied on any subject whatever, and with no approximation towards an exhaustion of the matter. The first is no sign at all, but on the contrary, without signs, cannot itself be known. The second and third are identical. The fourth and fifth must exist in order to the two preceding, and, as signs, are therefore included in them ; and the fifth may exist without them, and is consequently no sign of gracious affection. The sixth, eighth, ninth, and eleventh, are only periphrastic names for gracious affections themselves. The seventh, like the first, is a *petitio principii*, making the thing to be signified a sign. The tenth, as a general characteristic of believers in this life, is false ; or, if really intended to denote some general fact of the spiritual life of Christians in this world, is unintelligible. The twelfth is truly and properly what it purports to be—a sign ; and taken in connexion with the one which is numbered above as the second and third, is entirely synonymous with Jeremy Taylor's "twelve signs of grace and predestination."

But to our main point. The evidences of regeneration, as stated by President Edwards, with the exception of his twelfth sign are, by the necessity of nature, confined to this condition : That they are principles deduced from the revealed doctrines of the scriptures, respecting the nature of religion as a property of the human soul ; and are in no proper sense obtained from the experience of the spiritual life or from observation of its phenomena. They are chiefly suggested by those scriptural statements concerning God and man, which are designed as instruments of the Holy Spirit in producing the phenomena of the religious life, and which can be employed only with extreme difficulty, and very doubtful utility, as tests of the phenomena they are instrumental in producing. They are not matter of consciousness in the human mind. The mind cannot know them as objects of thought, except in the form of theological or philosophical propositions. It can institute no satisfactory comparison between them and any of the facts of its own consciousness, and is of course unable to settle the question of agreement or disagreement between its conscious experience, and this theological description of religion.

It is therefore not wonderful, that an attempt to state these scriptural principles in the form of signs or evidences of a genuine religious experience should result, as in the case presented above, in an enumeration of religious doctrines, with a merely verbal modification to adapt them to the form and design of the discourse. The usefulness of exercising the mind on these doctrines thus presented we do not call in question. We speak now only of their validity as evidences, and the perplexity they tend to produce in a reflecting mind whenever they are considered, for the sake of their practical benefit, strictly in this character. There can be no doubt that some of the most painful and discouraging forms of mental trouble, in Christians of a timid and delicate frame, come from this source. Still, if the trouble were either legitimate as an effect of truth on the mind, or salutary in its results, it could not be prudently deprecated. But the very suspicion that it is the effect of error and not of truth, and that it does great harm and no good to the comfort and character of the Christian, warrants an inquiry into the manner in which it arises.

There is undeniable truth in the energetic assertion of Dr.

Dwight, Vol. I., p. 29, "That the man who repents of his sins, who believes in Christ, who loves and fears God, who disinterestedly loves his neighbour and forgives his enemies, and who employs himself daily in resisting and subduing his own passions and appetites, must have some consciousness that he does these things. In this consciousness, as it continually rises up to the view of the mind, consists the primary or original evidence that we are Christians. Indeed all the evidence of this nature which we ever possess, is no other than this consciousness, variously modified and rendered more explicit and satisfactory by the aid of several things, with which, from time to time, it becomes connected."

The practical value of this fact is no less important than its truth is unquestionable. We are seriously concerned to inquire how far "this consciousness, variously modified, as it rises up continually to the view of the mind," and is made matter of discussion, and of formal and scientific statement, can either promote a genuine religious experience, or establish the standard by which such an experience can be known.

"The experimental exercises of religion," says Dr. Alexander, "are sure to take their complexion from the theory of doctrine entertained, or which is inculcated at the time." "There is what may be called a sectarian peculiarity in the experimental religion of all the members of a religious denomination." These facts, and others of a similar character, bear an important relation to what are currently denominated evidences of a true religious experience. They reveal the power which determines not only the forms of expression which are used in relating the experience, but the very conceptions which the mind entertains of its own religious state and operations. It would doubtless be matter of amazement to many a minister of the gospel who is in any good degree efficient in his instructions, to observe how few of his people express their religious experience in any other language than that which they have learned from himself. So entirely does the spiritual state of the mind, as far as it can be expressed in words, appear to be formed by the instructions received;—as the impression on wax is formed by the seal. The words of most religious persons of ordinary intelligence and little reflec-

tion, evidently take the lead of their thoughts, and produce what they express.

There are probably few ministers of the gospel accustomed to careful and intelligent observation in their intercourse with religious people, who have not found abundant occasion to remark the great difficulty of applying the evidences of holiness to particular cases. The agitation and bias of the mind, from a sense of the extreme importance of the case, the variety of natural dispositions in the persons concerned, the diversities of education and of prepossession, the similarity of natural and evangelical affections, the transient nature of the emotions, the infinite diversity of the mental states with which the religious affections are combined, the acknowledged imperfection of the religious character, and the frequent instances in which persons of accredited piety relapse, are certainly sufficient to inspire a prudent and conscientious Christian with caution in judging both of others and of himself. In these multifarious cases what standard can be stated in words as the decisive test of true religion? The elaborate attempt of President Edwards, and its confusion and deficiency, may well discourage persons of ordinary discernment and smaller knowledge, from attempting to erect the standard. Dr. Dwight gives the substance of the same evidences thus: 1. The renewed mind relishes all spiritual objects; 2. Real religion is always accordant with the dictates of reason enlightened by revelation; 3. The prevalence of a meek and humble disposition furnishes the mind with good reason to believe that it is renewed; 4. Without a prevailing spirit of gentleness towards others we cannot have sound and scriptural evidence of our Christianity; 5. A willingness to perform, accompanied by the actual performance of the duties required by the gospel, is an indispensable evidence of our Christianity. Then, to render all this evidence satisfactory, it must be, first, uniform, second, universal; or manifest in all the thoughts, words, and deeds of the man, and in relation to all branches of religious duty. "Real Christianity," he adds, "is the energy, the active power of the soul, steadily directed to that which is believed to be right, and thus directed to it because it is right." The signs here given are substantially those of President Edwards expressed in other and fewer words.

It is difficult to read the discussions of those authors, and similar discussions of the same subject by other writers, without feeling that one's thoughts are led in a circle; and we occasionally meet with a passage where the few steps of this circle are fully expressed in their order; as when the Rev. Thomas Boston writes to a Christian who is supposed to doubt respecting his own regeneration, and who complains of the prevailing love of the world. "Although the Christian may find himself more *moved* in his love of the creature than in his love of God, yet it is not therefore to be said that he loves the creature more than God, seeing love to God is always more firmly rooted in a gracious heart than love towards any creature whatever." We have therefore little hope of benefit from anything like a scientific discussion of the evidences of a true religious experience. The moment our terms on this subject become technical they become worse than useless. But the chief difficulty seems to be, that we are utterly unable to maintain in these discussions the appearance of logical consistency. We either set down, as signs of gracious affections, the gracious affections themselves, or adopt as signs those outward expressions of thought and feeling which, according to Edwards, *may* all exist without discernible defect, in the absence of true religion.

These remarks on discussions of religious experience in general will be found to contain the main principles by which we propose to judge of the practical value of the book before us. The work is divided into three parts. I. On the Inward Life in its connexion with Faith and Love. II. The Life of Faith and Love, followed by the crucifixion of the Life of Nature. III. On Inward Divine Guidance. At the end of the book are given forty "Religious Maxims, having a connexion with the Doctrines and the Practice of Holiness." The whole is the most elaborate attempt to construct a science of holiness that we have recently seen. It is a reproduction of the system of mysticism taught by William Law.

The first part of the book is composed of definitions and statements of the various principles of experimental religion, and illustrations of the distinctions between different religious affections, and of the relations of different affections to one another. In this portion of the book, the author states his

“Doctrine of Holiness” with directions to aid in the attainment of holiness. He treats of three sorts of Faith, appropriating faith, faith of acceptance, assurance of faith. He treats also of a life of special signs and manifestations, as compared with a life of faith; and having drawn several distinctions at large between various affections, pure and impure, natural and spiritual, &c., he closes this part with a chapter on the nature of the temptations of a sanctified heart.

The first chapter of the book gives the reader a very just idea of what he may expect in the sequel, as a theory of Inward Religion. We give the first sentence. “There is a modification or form of religious experience, which may conveniently and probably with a considerable degree of propriety be denominated the Interior or Hidden Life.” This phrase, “the Hidden Life,” he says, “we employ to indicate a degree of Christian experience greatly in advance of that which so often lingers darkly and doubtfully at the threshold of the Christian’s career;”—“a greatly advanced state of religious feeling, resulting in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind.” With this Hidden Life thus defined, he associates the language of the psalmist, “Thou art my hiding-place and my shield.” “He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty;” and the language of the apostle, “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;” “ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;” a series of exegetical suggestions which we presume will strike our intelligent readers as a curiosity. But not to dwell on the exegesis, we have here an Interior or Hidden Life; a vitality or living principle which differs in various particulars from every other form of life; which consists in a very advanced degree of Christian experience, “a greatly advanced state of religious feeling, resulting in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind.”

We are really unable to see with what principles of either scripture or philosophy a sound and clear mind could produce such an analysis of Christian experience as this. Does Christian principle become changed in its “vitality or living principle” by being increased in degree? Is there indeed a sort of life which belongs to a greatly advanced state of religious

feeling, but which exists in no degree at the threshold of the Christian's career? Is it true that there is a hidden life which is the endowment of a few favoured believers, and of which a person may be entirely destitute and yet be a believer? We presume the general view of Christians on this subject to be this. That the distinguishing endowment of the Christian is spiritual life; that this life every person possesses in his degree when he is born again, and is thus quickened from his death of trespasses and sins; and that as he grows in Christian virtue his life is strengthened and enlarged, and manifests itself in the various forms of outward exercise; but does not receive the addition of any new principles. The new-born soul is a believing soul, a holy soul, and has the true spiritual life, the hidden life. Whatever the scriptures say of one believer, as to his being united to Christ, they say of all believers; and to set up an arbitrary distinction between the nature or kind of life, the vitality or living principle of one stage of religious experience and that of another is evidently at variance with scripture and with all that reason can perceive in the facts.

But we are further instructed, that this "hidden life," this "greatly advanced state of religious feeling" results in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind. We are accustomed to reverse this order, and are quite sure that no Christian, who has taken his theory of the spiritual life directly from the scriptures, can be made to conceive the phenomena of that life in the order in which they are here presented. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." But "a greatly advanced state of religious feeling, resulting in a sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind," is abundant fruitfulness resulting in the branch being united to the vine; the fruit in order to the life and vigour of the branch. As to the doctrine of two species of union with the Infinite Mind, differing not in degree only, but in kind, the one a cause, the other an effect of great advancement in holiness, we do not find it in the scriptures; nor is it taught by the consciousness of Christians. It can only spring, as we judge, from some conceptions formed entirely without the

scriptures, and without a proper observation of spiritual phenomena. That successive stages of advancement in holiness should be attended with an enlivened consciousness of intimacy with God, is both conceivable and undeniable. We learn this from the scriptural theory of the divine operation on the human heart, in which the Holy Spirit, the energetic form or person of God, is represented as awakening in the minds of his subjects, "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. It accords with the entire scriptural doctrine of sanctification by the power of the Holy Ghost," that the sanctified should feel the agreement between their own holy dispositions and the holy mind of God revealed in his word. It is the conscious sympathy of like with like. It is a recognition of oneness; in which is involved the whole idea of the most intimate union conceivable between different persons. But we do not receive from the scriptures the notion of any sacred and intimate union with the Infinite Mind which belongs rather to one true believer than to another. Every true Christian must be as intimately united to Christ as any other; and any difference among different Christians, respecting the consciousness of that union, and the manifestation of its fruits, cannot amount to a different kind of life, but only to a different degree, or conception, or manifestation of the same life.

We cannot doubt that all believers sometimes, and the vast majority always, live in the exercise of their faith in Jesus as a Saviour, and the quiet hope of salvation, without having so much as a thought of their union with God distinctly in their minds. It is obvious also, that when this notion of union arises to them, it comes not out of their consciousness or from the attention of the mind to its own state, but entirely from suggestions out of the mind itself. And even when the term becomes familiar to them as a sign of somewhat belonging to their Christian relations, their idea of its meaning is indistinct and fruitless. The mass of Christians really bestow little attention upon the theology of their own religious experience, and scarcely know anything of their spiritual state, except that their feelings are interested in the doctrines and the hopes of the gospel. They are free from entire insensibility on the subject of their future welfare, and from the perplexity and peril of unbelief; they have a calm persuasion of their secu-

rity in the favour of God for the present and the future, and submit themselves habitually to such means of religious improvement as are in use in their church connexion; and beyond this the multitude of professed believers never go. This, it must be admitted, is the chief that their conditions in life seem to allow. Little beyond this is ordinarily attained except by those who renounce the pursuits of the present life to a greater extent than the majority believe it their duty to do. They are not accustomed to study their own mental states. They do not stop to classify their feelings, and give them names. They observe few distinctions between their various exercises, except that they discern between the agreeable and the painful; and when they are calm and happy in the devout occupation of their thoughts, they have neither a natural nor spiritual instinct which makes them endeavour to confirm their assurance or increase their enjoyment by any close inspection, or laborious analysis of their mental phenomena.

Yet many of these Christians have true religious enjoyment. Their pious exercises are lively and pure. They are even the more clear and happy in their meditations from being the less occupied with themselves and the more engaged with the truths of divine revelation. They have true spiritual life. They manifest its properties in their various ways and degree. Whatever of that life is interior or hidden belongs to them, from the first in due proportion to their spiritual growth. We can understand the process by which the outward manifestations of this spiritual life may change as the Christian advances towards maturity; but that a new principle of life should be added we cannot conceive from any analogy of nature, from experience or from the scripture. As this class of believers advance in their spiritual course, they acquire more clear and comprehensive views of religious doctrine; they become better acquainted with the meaning and spirit of the scriptures; their religious emotions acquire more firmness and consistency, their worldly feelings decline in strength, their habits of devotion become established, and the affections which are proper to the Christian life become the leading affections of their minds. They see more of the love and the glory of God revealed in Christ. Their hope of everlasting blessedness is enlivened, and has greater power over all their mental exercises;

and their enjoyment in spiritual respects is proportionably refined and enlarged.

This course of experience, probably continues, in the majority of cases till death; without passing through any point recognised by the believer as a crisis; and in cases of distinguished spiritual thrift, the advance suggests, at no stage, the thought of entering upon a new sort of life. There is even nothing, in the majority of intelligent and growing Christians, which becomes memorable in their consciousness of progress; nothing which seems to them a transition from one field or one level or one form of religious experience to another; nothing which their consciousness receives or presents as "a modification or form" of religious experience, a vitality or living principle which must, for convenience or propriety, be called by a peculiar name; but as they advance in the riches of knowledge and the blessedness of love, they take their present state as the proper enlargement and maturity of the past, induced upon it as manhood upon youth.

If it be only intended to signify by these terms "Interior or Hidden Life" a stage of spiritual progress ordinarily situated between the beginning and the end of the earthly life of the growing believer; if it be only recommended that the epoch of the attainment of a certain degree of knowledge, perchance of God, or of sin, or of holiness, or of the way of salvation, or of all these together; or that the epoch of the arrival at a certain degree in the scale of religious enjoyment, shall be called the beginning of an interior or hidden life, then provided always, that the stage thus designated be strictly defined we have nothing to say against the designation; except that it is useless. But such a use of the terms does not agree with their construction in this book. The author has this hidden life before him as a specific and desirable state "unknown to many in the beginning of their Christian career;" "appropriately and peculiarly the life of those who, advancing beyond the first elements of Christianity, may properly be said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus." It is in his view a form of life distinct from that which exists "in numbers of persons who profess to be Christians, and who are probably to be regarded as such in the ordinary sense of the term, but in whom the natural life still remains in part;" distinct from "the ordinary

forms of the religious state, where there is such a mixture of worldly and religious motives, such an impregnation of what is gracious with what is natural, that men of the world can tolerably estimate the principles which govern the conduct of its possessors." It is a state which the author gives specific directions for attaining; in which, if we understand it, the Christian is stationary, and beyond which there is in this life no advancement. We are therefore constrained to expose the fallacy of such a distinction, not so much to overthrow the structure of theological deformity which the author very confidently rears upon it, as to avert the confusion, error, and delusion it is adapted to beget in the experience and self-contemplation of the Christian.

If then this principle of interior life mean anything else than the principle of holiness begotten by the power of God, in every regenerate mind, we freely say we do not understand it. We have received no hint of such a thing from the Bible. And when Mr. Upham defines its characteristics, 1. that it is the life of the soul incorporated into the life of Christ; by which we suppose he means the union of the soul with Christ by faith; 2, that its moving principles its interior and powerful springs of action are not known to the world; 3, that it is lowly and retiring; 4, that it is not identical with the places and formalities and observances of religion; and finally, that it has its principles, inward and fixed, and is not wholly emotional, we recognise in his description nothing else than what we suppose to be the common Christianity of all true Christians. It is then, in our judgment, an error in doctrine, and an injury to the thoughts of the sincere and simple-minded among Christians, to offer such a distinction to their attention. If it were only useless we would not spend thought upon it. But believing, as we do, that such speculations, recommended to common readers by the pretence of explaining and assisting a true religious experience, do not unfrequently gain pernicious ascendancy over the thoughts, and by consequence over the religious conduct of pious people, we deem it important that their tendencies should be well considered. But of this more after a glance or two farther at the book.

Having presented the reader with an interior or hidden life, divine in its origin, inappreciable by the world, unobtrusive,

spiritual, and permanent, as a vital characteristic of the "desirable state" for the Christian, the author entertains the question, in what way we shall 'gain admission' into it; and with all didactic assurance and precision, as if starting from the chair of authority the laws of the spiritual experience he gives as his first and indispensable pre-requisite for admission to this desirable state, holiness of heart. Holiness of heart as a means of attaining inward life! If this order of spiritual phenomena can appear to any well instructed mind as true, we shall be compelled to regard the diversity of discernment among candid and intelligent persons in plain matters as far greater than we have hitherto supposed. This is no doubt the order of thought on this subject in many minds which are disciplined and led by theological teachings of a certain class; but how can it be regarded the order of things in the kingdom of spiritual life? Is holiness of heart the antecedent of the life of God in the soul of man, or the consequent of it, or identical with it? We do not propose to follow the author into the minute discussions on this and other points, with which the book abounds; for most of the errors there presented will, in the view of our readers, be sufficiently refuted by being stated. The idea of a perfect holiness as a condition of attaining what we are compelled to understand by the hidden life, is entirely preposterous. The author evidently has something occasionally in his mind as the image of the hidden life which we do not clearly conceive, and of which he himself has no definite and steady conception. "It is generally supposed" he remarks, "that God may exhibit pity and pardon to those in whom there still exist some relics or stains of inward corruption; in other words, that those may be forgiven or pardoned who are not entirely sanctified. But those who would walk acceptably with their Maker, who would receive from him his secret communications, and enjoy the hidden embraces of his love, must see to it first of all, that they are pure in heart." Now this sort of formal classification, placing under one description those who are only pitied and pardoned, and under another, those who receive the secret communications and the hidden embraces of their Maker, does not seem to us a very sensible, scriptural or useful way of denoting the different degrees of divine manifestations vouchsafed by him "who distributeth to every

man severally as he will." For, first, we have no scriptural suggestions that one sort of divine communication with the hearts of believers is more secret than another, or that any one kind of spiritual intercourse between God and his people, can more properly be called a hidden embrace than another. And, second, we know nothing from scripture of higher intimacies with God, than those with which the ideas of pity and pardon are strictly congenial. And what can be the use of such classifications as these? With no illustration from scripture, and lending no illustration to it, and with no discernible basis in the nature of things, how can they occupy the thoughts of the people to edification. Where is the ground for saying that the soul imperfectly sanctified is only pitied and pardoned, while the perfectly pure in heart may "cheerfully and boldly take the condition of sons?" Are there not some "weak in faith" for whom Christ died, and who by their faith in Christ Jesus, are children of God?

We take for granted that this author believes sanctification to be the work of the Holy Spirit, although he speaks as if he believed it to be the work of the sinner himself. But if the spirit of sanctification be the same with the spirit of adoption, how is it that the believer partially sanctified does not have the spirit of adoption in a corresponding degree. It seems to us much more agreeable to the common sense of Christians and the sense of scripture to represent the matter thus: That the believers whom Mr. Upham classes among the imperfectly sanctified, are those whose minds are under the power of Christian truth, and of the Holy Spirit, and have a comfortable persuasion of their peace with God, and rest in the hope of heaven, while they bestow little attention upon the doctrines of religion in their abstract forms, are altogether too little given to meditation on the objects of our faith, and are given least of all to the contemplation of their own mental states: that from a very low degree of Christian principle upward, we may observe all stages of increase in the power and the fruits of the spiritual life, until we come to those who appear to have reached the stature of mature piety; whose spirituality of mind, whose heavenly temper, and lively joys; whose humility, constancy, and devotion to Christ, are so conspicu-

ous and complete, as to render them worthy to be recommended as models of religious character.

Now it is doubtless possible, for reasons which have been mentioned above, and which are very obvious, to train these Christians to some extent, into a habit of watching their vicissitudes of feeling, of measuring with grave precision the comparative strength of contemporaneous emotions and giving different names to those states respectively in which different emotions or views are imagined to predominate; of exercising their fancy with representations of their spiritual state to be expressed in technicalities acquired by rote, and used with fluency and fervour, and self-complacency in their narratives of religious experience. This might indeed be done, but to what good purpose? Certainly not to any advantage in the clearness of their views of revealed truth concerning God. It could not tend to exalt their conceptions of the love of God towards them, or advance the power or purity of their love towards him; nor could it by any known law of the mind, help in the least their discernment of their own moral character and state. It would not tend at all to quicken their sense of the evil of what is wrong in them, or even assist their discovery of the wrong itself. And while we could hope for no good from such a discipline, we are warned by the history of these habits among professors of religion in different denominations, to beware of thus multiplying facilities for self-delusion, and propagating the seeds of error in regard to the nature of religion in the soul.

Of the author's directions to aid in the attainment of holiness, the first is that we "believe in the attainableness of sanctification or holiness at the present time; for," says he, "it is not according to the nature of the human mind to feel an obligation to be what the man feels it impossible for him to be." He also asserts as the second ground of his direction, that such is the relation between the will and belief, that no person can put forth a volition to do a thing, which at the same time he believes impossible to be done.

The foregoing assertions involve the long agitated question of the connexion between the conviction of ability and the consciousness of obligation, and also the relation between

ability and will. We do not now propose to go at large into this discussion. We shall only take this occasion to present a few thoughts on this subject for the consideration of this writer and such of his readers as may have their attention drawn to these remarks.

We shall apply our present remarks on the intellectual conditions of the sense of obligation directly to the doctrines and language of the book before us. We have not space nor inclination here to discuss the subject on general principles. The assertions we have quoted above relate to the perfect sanctification of the believer in the present life. And we take for granted that the "belief of the possibility" of this sanctification means the belief that the state of perfect holiness is attainable in the present life, at the pleasure or wish or determination of the believer himself.

It is proper then, first to ask Mr. Upham how he knows what he so confidently asserts, that no man can feel himself under obligation to be what he believes it impossible for him to be? Upon what settled and acknowledged principle of human nature is that doctrine supported? If that be true, and we will not now deny it, we wish to see the proof of it, that we may believe it. The author propounds a certain doctrine respecting the necessary and universal connexion of a sense of obligation in the human mind with a given intellectual perception of the possibility of something; the relation of a certain feeling to a certain exercise of the understanding on a given object. He asserts that the two are in their nature mutually dependent; that the one cannot exist without the other. We demand, therefore, on what ground this is asserted? Under what general principles of the moral and intellectual nature of man is this proposition comprehended? Where is the process of induction from the facts of the moral nature of man, the result of which is this proposition, that the feeling of obligation is necessarily and universally joined with the particular intellectual state called the belief of ability. If any such process of induction has been given we are unacquainted with the fact; and therefore to us, the proposition, though it might be true, can as yet be only an hypothesis.

It avails nothing here to declare that the question is settled by the consciousness of men. The feeling of obligation, in-

deed, is matter of consciousness, but the fact of ability is matter, not of consciousness, but of intellectual perception. If presented as a truth, and perceived as such by the mind, it is matter of belief. If one believes this doctrine of ability, he is conscious of his belief. But, for aught that consciousness can know about it, that belief may be groundless. And in that case a man is liable to be represented as feeling bound to do what is in fact impossible, because he falsely believes it to be possible. But besides all this, how can consciousness testify to a necessary and universal union of these two mental phenomena, the sense of obligation and a particular belief? It may be true that the feeling of obligation in Mr. Upham is always joined with the belief of a particular doctrine concerning ability because that may be a belief which he habitually entertains. Yet even in him, how can consciousness determine that these co-existent states of mind are mutually dependent. But suppose, what he cannot deny to be fact, that a very large proportion of those whose views on that question have been formed from deliberate and intelligent investigation, entertain the contrary belief, and yet feel as lively a sense of obligation as himself; and suppose moreover, what is also the fact, that the mass of mankind are conscious of their feelings of obligation in all their relations and circumstances, while they never have a thought of the matter of possibility at all. And if, in view of such facts, this theory of obligation and ability is still upheld, it must be regarded not as having a recognized connexion with the observed phenomena of human nature, but as an arbitrary conception, a figment of particular minds.

The second ground of the author's first direction for attaining holiness is, that no person,—such is the relation between will and belief,—can put forth a volition to do a thing which, at the same time, he believes impossible to be done.

Here is a fearless and sweeping assertion involving the great question of the nature of volition as a state of the human mind. It is an assertion which indicates an entire misconception as to what, in the present state of mental science, we are warranted to declare as truth. How can a philosopher, who understands what he says, and has a due regard for the sacredness of truth, allow himself to assert, at this day, a proposition the truth of which is to be determined by some settled

and acknowledged principle respecting the nature of volition? To illustrate some of the difficulties of this question, which, if not insurmountable, are as yet unsurmounted, let us take the examples given by the author of the paragraph before us. 'I do not believe in the possibility of flying in the air; and I am unable to put forth a volition to do any such thing. I may exercise a desire to fly in the air; but while I have an utter disbelief in its possibility, I shall never put forth a volition to do it. So if I disbelieve in the possibility of being holy, I can never put forth a volition, that is to say, a fixed determination, to be so. I may put forth a volition to do many good things; I may put forth a volition to grow in grace; but to put forth a volition, a fixed unalterable determination, with divine assistance, to resist and overcome every sin, to be wholly the Lord's,—to be holy,—when I believe such a result to be unattainable, is what, on the principles of the philosophy of the mind, I am unable to do?'

There has never a definition of volition been given, which if substituted for the word in the passage before us would not show the paragraph to be nonsense. If we take this one definition which all will admit to be sufficiently indefinite, namely, that volition is the state of mind which immediately precedes action, we are then gravely told that according to the laws of nature, it is impossible for a man to have a state of mind which immediately precedes the act of flying in the air. So also is it impossible that one who believes holiness unattainable should have the state of mind which immediately precedes being holy! In following up this method of philosophy, we are required to construct a definition of action; and it becomes no enviable task to frame such a definition of action taken for a single consequent of volition, as shall cover the two cases of flying and being holy; even if we could frame one that will apply to either of them. The volition to fly must either be resolved into the innumerable volitions which precede and produce severally the many muscular motions of which flying is the comprehensive name, or it must be put as a single and general antecedent of those volitions,—a general volition to put forth a series of particular volitions. In either case it must be allowed to be a thing of somewhat difficult conception. As to a volition to be holy, we acknowledge that

we have no metaphysical ideas which help us to form a conception of such a thing at all. But this volition, to crown all, is in the language of this book, a volition to be holy, *with divine assistance!* And all this is stated with the grave appearance of philosophical formality. What is that mental state to which this writer gives the name of volition? He would undoubtedly apply the term to that state of mind which he considers the simple impulsive cause of lifting up his hand. But here he calls by the same name that more complex, comprehensive, remote, and continuous propension which is conceived as belonging among the antecedents of particular and direct volitions and having only a share with other antecedents in determining severally the actions of the man. Such are the permanent propensions of men to seek wealth, honour, or holiness. With such use of language what progress can be hoped for towards the attainment of clear and established results from our investigation of the facts and laws of human nature.

But the climax of absurdity seems to be reached by directing those who desire perfect sanctification to believe the attainment to be possible. The reader is, of course, expected to remember that this is the direction of a perfectionist, addressed to one who is supposed to be not yet fully persuaded that the doctrine of his author is true. The question is whether it be a doctrine of the Holy Scriptures that the people of God, can expect entire freedom from sin in the present life. The evidence which is to settle this question is, not the command to be perfectly holy; for that no more proves the fact of perfect holiness in any believer on earth than the preceptive prohibition of sin in the world proves the entire non-existence of sin. But the evidence must be, either some instance or instances known and undeniable, or, which is equivalent to actual cases, some unquestionable declaration of God that such things shall be. When these things are presented, either or both of them, to a conscientious mind, they will do their legitimate work. The belief produced by them will be rational, sound, and safe. A person who should resist their force might properly be held blameable for perverseness, and for rejecting the testimony of God. And it would be lawful to suggest to such a person inducements to belief which should address the feelings hostile to the right use of reason, and persuade in favour of proper

evidence, where the evidence itself has failed. But to attempt to persuade without evidence, or beyond it, where men are supposed to assert the lack of it, is ridiculous. It is the logic of fanaticism. When Mr. Upham, upon such grounds as himself can deem worthy the reason of man, has gained the assent of his readers to his doctrine, he may offer his counsels as the guide of his followers. But to urge considerations which no man can rely upon as the safe guide of rational and moral beings, and which, notwithstanding, lead captive weak minds without true reasons, and often against them, is, either to lead them right, by irrational and unlawful means, or to lead them wrong, by means which destroy the reasonable hope of correction.

Our author represents a permanent and devout personal consecration as an act without which no one can reasonably expect to make much advancement in religion. "Unless the Christian is willing to make such a consecration, and unless he actually adds the execution of the thing to the willingness or desire to do it, by a formal and decisive act, we can see no encouragement that he will reach those results of personal and inward experience which will be hereafter indicated." This act of consecration is given as one of the indispensable things to the attainment of holiness. He guards his reader against confounding consecration with the full or complete state of sanctification. This confusion of ideas, he says, ought to be avoided. Sanctification is something more than the consecrating act. To give an epitome of his theology of consecration, it is simply putting forth the volition to be wholly the Lord's. A fixed purpose, not to be altered during the whole period of our existence, to break off from every known sin, and to walk, to the full extent of our ability, in the way of the divine requirements. This can be done, for the persons are supposed to be Christians in a justified state, whose dead wills have been partially quickened by the Holy Ghost. This act of consecration is necessary, first, because we have no available faith in the promises of God without it; second, because we have no encouragement to believe that God will sanctify us in the state of personal and spiritual inactivity and declension. "God recognizes," says the author, "the moral agency of man, fallen as he is, and especially when, after having justified him by the

application of the Saviour's blood, he has given him the principle of a new spiritual life. It is because he has given us the power of distinguishing between good and evil ; because he has given us judgment, and conscience, and will ; because he has breathed into us the breath of a new spiritual life, thereby putting us into communication with himself, and opening to us the fountains of everlasting strength, that he has the right, and exercises the right, of requiring us to surrender all to him." This confusion of ideas can afford no light to an enquiring mind. What can a reader understand of the true connexion between the agency of God and the moral agency of man, from the assertion that God will never sanctify him in a state of spiritual and personal inactivity and declension ? In what other state does he find us when he sanctifies us ? The majority of Christians are incapable of discerning a distinction between a state of spiritual declension, and a want of sanctification. Even if there were a distinction between them in reality, it seems entirely unintelligible to the mass of believers, and incapable of being explained to them. They cannot be made to see a difference between the act of sanctification and the act of imparting spiritual life. The verbal distinction may be set before them, and so inculcated as to work a permanent conformation of their modes of speech, while it produces no change in their thoughts of the nature of things.

There lies at the bottom of this theory of consecration a notion of holiness in the abstract as an object of desire and of active pursuit. "It will of course be understood, that in making this act of consecration we have a sincere and earnest desire for holiness." The common idea of holiness, and an idea which could not easily be changed, makes it the state or quality of being conformed to the will of God ; of a disposition to do right ; of the disposition of one who loves God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself. Now we can understand a desire for wealth in a person who is not rich ; a desire for knowledge in a mind which is ignorant, a desire for distinction in a person who is living in obscurity. But in a miser we cannot conceive the existence of a desire to be liberal ; in a selfish mind the desire to love another as himself ; in an ungodly mind the desire to love God. The consciousness of obligation to love is not what we rightly express by desire to

love. The sense of obligation in a miser to be liberal, is not a desire to be liberal. Nor would a desire for the credit of liberality, and for any of its rewards, be a desire to be liberal. The desires of a spiritual mind seem to us most properly represented as having for their object not holiness in the abstract, but the view and enjoyment of God, and of all the things on which the spiritual affections are set. We are able with this view to understand our language. When we speak of a desire for holiness, if we consider holiness to mean not a quality of our own disposition, but a property of the object of our contemplation, we use language on this subject as we use it on others. But the desire for subjective holiness appears to us as holiness itself, implying and presupposing the holiness which is verbally placed as its object. In any sense in which we are accustomed to use the language, to say of a man whose affections are set on things on the earth that he desires to set his affections on things above, is to assert a contradiction in terms. We might say that he desires the benefits of a spiritual mind; that he desires release from the apprehension of the wrath of God, and from the disquietude of a wounded conscience; and the happiness of indulging his worldly affections in security from evil. But we have no knowledge of any usage of language which would make it strictly proper to say that any man *desires* holiness which he does not possess.

“To desire holiness” is a common expression, indeed; but when we look, in the nature of things, for the signification of the phrase, we find that the words do not express any theological idea. For all the ordinary purposes of religious conversation, like the terms of common parlance respecting the rising and setting of the sun, it is sufficiently correct. It is strongly descriptive of a state of mind common to all true Christians in their respective degrees. But when taken in its literal sense, and built into a philosophical theory of religious experience, it destroys every part of the structure that rests upon it.

The use which the author makes of the literal sense of these terms is important for his theological purpose. He could not well get on without it, in the construction of his theory of religious experience. He conceives a modification or form of religious experience which he denominates the *Hidden Life*,

the life not of those "who are probably to be regarded as Christians in the ordinary sense of the term," but of those "who, advancing beyond the first elements of Christianity, may properly be said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus." This Hidden Life must be represented as attainable; and attainable too, in some sense, at the option of the believer. The subjective and causal antecedents of the interior or hidden life are the act of religious consecration, and the efficient virtue of this consecrating act, on which all its validity depends, is the desire for holiness. With this desire for holiness, Mr. Upham gives to his act or covenant of religious consecration a theological validity indispensable to its usefulness in his system. Without that desire, the first step in the process of attaining the interior life cannot be taken. But if the phrase "desire for holiness," is not a strictly theological form of speech; if there is no mental state known to the experience of the Christian which can in the precise language of theological science be called by that name; but if what is usually denominated the "desire of holiness," is in truth the longing of the holy mind after God, after the lively and comforting view of his character, and his words, and his works, and after the lively apprehensions of his promised favour; that longing which is proper to the sanctified mind not favored, for the time, with the fulness of gracious manifestations; then to represent the desire of holiness as a condition of attaining holiness is to speak without meaning. It is a desire which can have no place in a mind not already holy, and the degree of holiness in the heart is the only degree in which this desire can exist. The act of consecration and the desires, whatever they may be, which attend it, are the fruit of holiness already in the heart. They are the effect of which holiness is the cause; and the Christian, when he makes the entire consecration of himself to the service of God, does it rather from an impulse of holy feeling within him, than from a regard to holy feeling which he does not possess, and which he may thereby acquire.

It is an error to make so much of an act of consecration as a means of attaining holiness. It is also an error to lay so much stress on an outward and formal act of any kind. The strong feeling of devotion, it is true, will invariably produce the form; and it is also true, that the formal act of consecration has its in-

fluence in aiding the holy purposes of the mind. But the readers of Mr. Upham can hardly fail to receive the impression that he considers the outward act as possessing something like intrinsic validity ; without which he can see no encouragement that the Christian will reach the higher results of personal inward experience.

In relation to this subject of religious consecration, the truth, as it arises out of experience to the view of most believers, will doubtless be found to accord, in the main, with the following statement. When the sinner is renewed by the Spirit of God, and becomes clearly sensible of the divine favour towards himself, in forgiving his sins, and giving him the comfort of faith, he feels the corresponding spirit of obedience, and is prompted to inquire for the will of God. "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" This question is asked with an ardour of self-devotion usually corresponding to the clearness of the spiritual perception of the authority, and the views which the convert is enabled to take of the benefits he has received from God. As he gradually gains the knowledge of truth, and his thoughts and feelings become more freely and fully conformed to the objects of his Christian faith, he finds himself more cheerfully engaged in the performance of his religious duties, and more happy in his meditations and prayers. He laments his defects of understanding and of feeling. The growing propensity of his mind is towards the contemplation of God, as revealed in his works and his word ; and especially as revealed in the work of grace upon his own heart. He acquires a better judgment in relation to Christian morals ; gains a more accurate and extensive acquaintance with the doctrines of Christ ; and a greater facility in deducing from them the rules of the Christian life. Meanwhile he becomes more fully established in his communion with God by faith and prayer ; and experiences something like what Archbishop Leighton calls being "knit to God," as one spirit may be said to be knit by love and fellowship to a kindred spirit. He becomes gradually more assured of the divine favour, by the constant experience of it ; until he is enabled in the strength of his confidence to say, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to sep-

arate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The whole of this process is pervaded by the spirit of consecration. The principle of devotion to God, corresponds to a considerable extent, with the other forms of his pious affection. He finds himself increasingly disposed, as he grows in knowledge and love, to present himself, soul and body, unto God as his reasonable service. The more he meditates upon the love of Christ, the more that love constrains him "that he should not live henceforth any more unto himself, but unto him who died for him and rose again;" and this spirit of consecration, whether it puts forth the "formal and decisive act," or not, according as its circumstances and training may determine, seeks its natural and informal expression in all good words and works. Its very instinct corresponds with the all comprehensive law of Christian devotion: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Among the excellent thoughts which appear on almost every page of this book, and which prove that the author has read extensively and thought deeply on the subject of religious experience; we find evidence of a degree of spiritual discernment and knowledge altogether sufficient to render the book attractive among a large class of religious people. There are few persons of lively temperament, and strong religious emotion, who will not become interested in the discussion; pious persons who either may not comprehend the theological relations of the various topics of the book as they are here erected, with unusual skill and precision into a peculiar system; or who have discernment enough to perceive, and decision of judgment enough to disregard the false relations in which the good thoughts are placed, will read the book with advantage. The author all along gives clear and vehement expression to the most absorbing emotions of the pious mind. Many of the operations of the mind under the influence of religious truth, he traces and analyzes with remarkable discrimination and precision: and were it not for the technical and intensely systematic aspect under which his thoughts are presented, a large part of his book might be recommended as a valuable help to the religious meditations of Christians. As it is, however, many will read the treatise with far more attention and interest

than profit. The things really valuable in the discussion in a religious point of view, are the just descriptions and expressions of many evangelical sentiments; but the manner of the author draws the reader's attention continually away from the things he has written to his theological aim in writing them. The work will greatly assist those who "are seeking" a plausible, compact, and well digested theory of perfectionism, but to readers who are striving according to the gospel method, for assurance of faith and perfect love, it will give far less help than they themselves may suppose.

They are few if any Christians in this world who would not feel their evidences of inward perfection severely sifted, if not entirely dissipated by the author's exposition of the characteristics of perfect love. The perfect love which he describes, "when in actual exercise, implies a forgetfulness of self. Whenever our thoughts return upon ourselves; whenever, in the exercise of "reflex acts," we begin to enquire into the specific nature of our feelings for the purpose of estimating the amount of their enjoyment; whenever we experience a jealousy that God does not give to us all those returns and caresses of love that we should be pleased with; we may be assured that although we may love much, we might love much more. In other words, our love, whatever other terms may be applied to it, cannot be regarded as perfect. It is the nature of perfect love, in its forgetfulness of self, to array the object towards which it is directed, in every possible excellence. To that object, so far as it is truly worthy of its attachment, it gives the strength of its affections without reservation and without limits. It is perfectly self-sacrificing; and it would account itself dishonoured and degraded if it turned back on itself for a moment to estimate its own reward. It has its reward, it is true. Perfect love is necessarily its own rewarder. But the reward comes without seeking, and is enjoyed so entirely without notice, that it does not turn the mind away for a moment from the object of its affections." If any person can read the latter part of this description of perfect love without feeling that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for him to acquire such love, and to be fully assured that he possesses it, he must have both an exquisiteness and simplicity of affection and a precision of self-knowledge to which,

in any conceivable conditions of the present life of a believer, we should not dare to lay claim. It looks like a complete evisceration of the spiritual system. It leaves no organ in the soul of a perfect man which may perform an office appropriate to his earthly state. If a perfect love so rigidly excludes hope, we should say that in a man whose affections are "perfect" in their adaptation to his present relations, its possibility is inconceivable. If such a state of the religious affections be in any case really brought about, it must be by an artificial workmanship, a distortion of the spiritual frame, which unfits it for its place in this world. With such a theory of perfect love, we must take exceptions to Paul's commendation of the religious affections of Abraham, who looked for a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God; of Moses, who had respect unto the recompense of the reward; of Jesus himself, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross.

In treating of the varieties of Christian character, the author describes three classes of Christians, "easily distinguishable from each other." The first class are those who may yet be said to possess faith, though destitute in a considerable degree of any marked spiritual manifestations and joys. Some exhibit a little more strength and activity than others, and God honours them by employing them in the smaller charges and duties of his church. They often have the trait of humble perseverance. They grow in grace, but not rapidly, and not unfrequently become strong in the end. They are "not wanting in sincerity, and they cling to the cross of Christ as the foundation of their hope." They seldom "make any strong impression on the world, but their example is generally salutary." This is a description of a class of Christians.

The second class are those who "have had striking manifestations in the way of strong convictions, and of subsequent great illuminations. . . . They may be said to have a considerable degree of faith; but they evidently have less faith than feeling. Their mental history, under its various changes, partakes in no small degree of the striking, the marvellous. They are generally the marked ones, the particular and bright stars in the church; . . . undoubtedly very useful, aiding themselves in the things of religion, and aiding others; but it can hardly be said of them, that their life is hid with

Christ in God. They think too much of their own efforts and powers. They place too high an estimate on human instrumentality. They do not fully understand the secret of their own nothingness ; nor do they know in their own experience to its full extent, the meaning of self-crucifixion. . . . They are not destitute of Christian graces ; but they need more lowliness of heart and more faith. Nevertheless . . . God owns and blesses them, and their memorial is often written in multitudes of grateful hearts." This is the author's description of another class of Christians, intended, of course, for otherwise it were no classification to exclude the individuals of the first.

The third class are those whose life may be said to be emphatically a life of faith ; . . . in whom the spiritual life does not at all mingle "with the tendencies and activities of nature ;" who "hold all in subjection to God, and rest calmly in the great central power." They are "men of grave countenance ; of a retired life, except when duty calls to public action ; of few words, simple manners, and inflexible principle. They have renounced self, and they naturally seek a low place, remote from public observation, and unreachd by human applause." "These," he exclaims in fine, proceeding in a strain which to us seems far more fervid than intelligible, "these are the men of whom martyrs are made. When the day of great tribulation comes, when dungeons are ready, and fires and burning, then God permits his children, who are weak in the faith, to stand aside. Then the illuminated Christians, those who live in the region of high emotion rather than of quiet faith, who have been conspicuous in the world of Christian activity, and have been as a pleasant and a loud song, and in many things have done nobly, will unfold to the right and the left, and let this little company of whom the world is ignorant, and whom it cannot know, come up from their secret places to the great battle of the Lord. To them the prison is as acceptable as the throne ; the place of degradation, as the place of honour. They eat of the 'hidden manna,' and have the secret name given them 'which no man knoweth.' Ask them how they feel and they will perhaps be startled, because their thoughts are thus turned from God to themselves. And will answer by asking what God wills. They have no feeling separate from the will of God. All high and low, all joy and sorrow, all

honour and dishonour, all friendship and enmity, are brought to a level, and are merged and lost in the great realization of God present in the heart. Hence chains and dungeons have no terrors; a bed of fire is as a bed of down. It is here in this class of persons, that we find the great grace of sanctification—a word, alas, too little understood in the church. These are they who, in the spirit of self-crucifixion, live by faith, and faith only.”

We have, we are free to say, no knowledge from experience in ourselves or from observation of religious phenomena in others, which enables us to assign any meaning to a great portion of this description of the author's third class of Christians; and we are constrained to admit as literally true that it is a sort of religion “which no man knoweth.” It is a sanctification which leaves not only no self, but no humanity behind. We have never seen any thing in good men, either of the past or the present, which we recognized to be true religion, and which would bear to be described in such terms.

But to return a moment to our author's classification. It appears to us in the first place unfounded in the facts of practical Christianity. It cannot have arisen from any scientific contemplation of the great varieties of Christian character as they are actually presented to the enlightened student of the works of God. The traits of character assigned to each class so far as they can be considered abiding properties of the mind, are found, in their respective degrees, in all true believers. The imperfections of the first class, the consciousness of weakness in faith, slow growth in grace, limited views of truth, and imperfect satisfaction in duty; belong at times to all Christians; or, if there are any exceptions, they are the doubtful ones belonging to the class of the “sanctified.” The imperfections of the second class, their thinking too much of their own efforts and powers, and placing too high an estimate on their own instrumentality, their not fully understanding their own nothingness, and not knowing in their own experience and to its full extent the meaning of self-crucifixion; are not all these a subject of lamentation in those whom we have always been accustomed to regard as examples of piety in the church; and is not a lively sensibility on these points one of the things which

recommends to us the consistency and completeness of character which are proper to the prisoners of hope?

Again, the Christian virtues assigned to the third class of Christians, that is, the perfect, are universally presumed to belong, in various degrees to all persons who are known as Christians by their fruits. As to the spiritual life not "mingling more or less with the tendencies and activities of nature," we do not know what it means; but gravity, simplicity, meekness, quietness, firmness, self-renunciation, contempt for the applause of the world, communion with God, and inward spiritual strength from union with God, are universal in the true members of the body of Christ, according to the measure in which each has received the Holy Spirit. And as for the martyrs; their sufferings were severe, their constancy was exemplary, they were noble and faithful witnesses for Christ; but will Mr. Upham pretend to say, that, of the millions whose lot it has been to suffer death for the name of Christ, every one was unquestionably perfect in his self-renunciation, his forgetfulness of the reward, his disrelish for public observation, and his freedom from all the affections of the natural man? And does not the spirit of self-denial for Christ's sake appear in its measure in every sense where spiritual duty is done in Christian love, and with intention of the Saviour's glory? When we hear a broken-hearted suppliant pouring out before God, the sorrows of his penitence, the devotion of his gratitude, and the trembling joy of his struggling faith, though he have to lament numerous short comings in his daily life, and many deficiencies in his affections towards God and his fellow-men, we feel quite as sure of his sincerity and of the firmness of his soul in any emergency of the Christian warfare, as we should feel in relation to one who had imbibed from some theory of experience a persuasion of his own perfection in faith and love.

The assurance or conceit of strong faith is not strong faith itself; nor is the one inseparable from the other. From all we can understand of the origin and sustenance of the two principles, and from their natural relations to each other, in the ordinary state of believers in this world, we are not inclined to consider the one as an indication or support of the purity and strength of the other. Assurance of faith, however, as defined

by Mr. Upham himself, is nothing but a very high degree of faith. "I know not," says he, "that the faith, which is experienced in these marked and triumphant instances of the religious life," the instances of assurance of faith, "is different from what is experienced in other cases, except in the single circumstance of degree." In this admission he is unquestionably right; but the admission is inconsistent with his entire discussion of the nature and relations of assurance of faith. He represents it as a distinct and well defined modification of personal religious experience, which has for many ages been known and recognised in a number of Christian sects, under the denomination of assurance of faith. Substituting now his own definition of assurance of faith, we have a distinct and well defined modification of religious experience, under the denomination of "a very high degree of faith."

And this distinct and well defined modification of religious experience is "known and recognised by a number of Christian sects." It is a sectarian distinction. The dogmatical persuasion of the possibility of a very high degree of faith has been, by our author's showing, for many ages a characteristic of certain Christian sects! This is indeed the fact. And a humiliating fact it is. It is a mortifying illustration of the absurd sectarian dissensions into which Christian people are often led by the blind power of words.

The Confession of Faith adopted by the Congregational churches in England in 1658, and afterwards, with slight variations by the American Congregational churches, in the synod of ministers and delegates assembled at Boston, in 1680, devotes a chapter to this subject; and in that chapter occurs the following passage, of which Mr. Upham avails himself as a valuable authority. "Such as believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life, be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace; and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed. This certainty is not a bare conjectural or probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, and also upon the inward evidence of those graces unto which promises are made, and upon the immediate

witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy." The Confession holds this infallible assurance, as "not so belonging to the essence of Faith," but that a true believer may struggle long without it; until being enabled by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto." It also admits divers ways in which true believers may have the assurance of their salvation "shaken, diminished and intermitted; as by negligence in preserving it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance," &c. The Confession aforesaid holds, moreover, concerning faith, that though it may be many times assailed and weakened, it yet grows up "in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ."

As this Confession had been brought to our notice by Mr. Upham's quotation from it, we have ourselves extracted the substance of several short passages for the purpose of showing the confusion of ideas in which this branch of experimental theology originates, or to which it leads. The Confession considers assurance as being not so of the essence of faith, but that a true believer may live long without it, and having attained, may lose it in part, or entirely; while the same document represents faith itself as growing to the attainment of full assurance; that is, to such strength as to set the believer free, for the time, from all doubt of the saving mercy of God towards him. Mr. Upham too defines assurance to be a very high degree of faith; and yet holds it as a distinct and well defined modification of religious experience. Now the reader of these two authorities, who is striving after clear ideas on this subject takes the substance of the matter as thus given him with all formality and precision, and finds it to be this: that while a very high degree of faith is not of the essence of faith, a true believer may, without extraordinary revelation, and by the faithful use of the ordinary means, attain a distinct and well-defined modification of religious experience which may be denominated a very high degree of faith. And this is a per-

suasion, "which has been known and recognised, for many ages, in a number of Christian sects!"

We referred above to a confusion of ideas on this subject. We find it in all the writers who attempt to treat assurance as a distinct religious characteristic. It consists of confounding the personal and mental properties of genuine Christian faith with the evidences of its existence in the soul. The inward spiritual properties which distinguish the mind of a true believer in Jesus, are those which would prompt the evangelical answer to the question, Who and what is Jesus Christ in relation to the universe, to the church, to yourself? The evidences of faith in the soul are the grounds on which a believer would rest his reply to the question, How do you know that you entertain concerning Christ the views and feelings of a true believer and a child of God? It is to the latter question that the Congregational Confession assigns the grace of assurance, when it says that "such as believe in the Lord Jesus . . . may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace;" and also when it signifies that this assurance is "not of the essence of faith." But when it speaks of faith as growing into assurance, it seems to present assurance as denoting an unwavering conviction of the truth asserted in answer to the former question. Mr. Upham makes assurance to relate to the former question, when he represents it as only a very high degree of faith. But when he speaks of it as an assurance of our being accepted with God, and of our being subjects of his gracious influence and regard, he seems to refer it to the latter. President Edwards introduces several paragraphs on the subject of assurance, under the proposition that we have no certainty that religious affections are genuine from the fact that the persons who are the subjects of them are very confident that they are genuine. By bringing in assurance in this connexion he sufficiently indicates his view of assurance as referring to the evidences of the existence of saving faith in the soul. But in his remarks on assurance, he speaks of the pious patriarchs as placing an assured reliance on the word of God; which again is only faith in a very high degree. He refers, however, to the experience of the apostles and of other saints in a way which proves that he did not consider assurance of faith at all distinguishable from assurance

of hope. John Wesley has recorded the statements of several members of the Moravian brotherhood with whom he conversed with particular reference to their experience of assurance of faith. And from those statements it is obvious that they all regarded assurance of faith as a special gift distinct from justifying faith, a belief of the fact of their justification; while they still sought it not by consulting the evidences of the existence of faith in their minds, but by contemplating the faithfulness of God in his word. In other words, they confounded the properties of faith itself with the evidences of its existence in the soul.

The sole question with which we are concerned in relation to this subject, is this: What is that state of mind which so many Christians are so happy as to attain, and which all are exhorted to attain in this life; and what are the conditions and circumstances of its existence, so far as they can be reduced to general rules? That a strictly scriptural and philosophical answer to this question is possible we will not take it upon ourselves positively to deny; but we think it is very generally felt by the intelligent and inquiring portion of the Christian church, that no such answer has ever yet been given. As a sign that the principles which have hitherto directed the investigation of this subject exhibit no very obvious agreement with scripture and with the common sense of religious people, we take the fact that the rigid inculcation of any of the theories hitherto propounded results in confusion and inconsistency of doctrine, and in embarrassment and obliquity in practice. In those cases in which the experience of the Christian goes before his theory, and the theory comes to explain to him the nature and course of his experience, all is well. But when, as it happens with the majority, the theory precedes the experience, and the person has his mind pre-occupied with this or that description of the nature and order of the religious affections before he has felt those affections in exercise, the theoretical teaching, while it neither directs nor hastens the growth of the thriving believer, embarrass and retard the progress of the weak, by drawing their attention "to doubtful disputations."

To plead in recommendation of this species of theology, as Mr. Upham does, for instance, in behalf of his theory of as-

assurance of faith, that correct views on such subjects are of great importance to the purity and value of the religious experience of Christians, is inadmissible; because the plea is proved by the history of experimental religion to be false. And were it true, it would be unavailing with two classes of people, who compose a large proportion of those Christians whose judgment in these matters is worthy of regard: first, those who distrust the correctness of the prevailing speculations, and secondly, those who regard the study of any philosophical theory of religious experience, at present known, as tending to distorted and inconsistent views of the great facts of revelation, and to impair the influence of those facts upon the mind. It will not be denied that some of the greatest proficients in the spiritual life, whose examples engage our admiration, appear to have had no knowledge of any general laws of religious phenomena to which they studied subjection, but to have followed, as it were, the instincts of their renewed nature; and of those who began with theoretical teaching as to the order and mutual relations of the Christian affections it will hardly be made clear, that any were either the purer or more consistent and stedfast on account of their having formed their conceptions of their state and progress by the demands of their theory.

The persons described by Mr. Wesley were able to specify the hour and the place in which they passed from the state of incomplete experience to the assurance of faith. They belonged to the society of United Brethren, whose views on the subject of assurance were strict. In the early period of their history as a denomination, they are said to have regarded none but those who claimed to have assurance of faith, as having true faith at all. No others were for a time received to their communion. One of their distinguished teachers, as late as the seventeenth century, entertained the opinion, which was one of the primitive articles of the society, and was retained by that branch of the society of which he was the head, that without assurance of faith no person could give satisfactory evidence of the faith which justifies. It might therefore be expected that such a theory of experience would beget the corresponding experience in all whose minds were strongly wrought upon by the Spirit of God in view of truth

presented in such connexion. But that the belief and inculcation of these peculiar views of inward religion, and the prevailing experience which attended them, were not remarkable for the unadulterated fruits of entire sanctification in the life, and for producing entire freedom from the "tendencies and activities of nature," appears probable from the fact, that while that body of Christians are worthy of imitation in their persevering devotion to the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, and in other truly Christian characteristics they were not unfrequently rent with dissensions, which sometimes threatened the extinction of the society; and which were not matters of so sacred relation to conscience, but that the interposition of some judicious and influential individual could prevail to allay them. While therefore the assertion is doubtless true, that of the whole number of Christians of that denomination, the proportion of cases of triumphant assurance of faith is greater than in any other denomination, the natural principles which may have contributed to such a result, together with some conspicuous portions of the history of that denomination, will prevent many candid and intelligent Christians from presuming that their assurance was inseparable from a general completeness of religious character.

The strenuous disputes which not long ago enlisted some strong minds in this country respecting the order in which certain Christian affections are produced in the regenerate mind, have mostly had their day; and the reason for the present silence on those points is probably not so much that the truth was settled by the controversy, and that it was clearly established that faith comes before repentance, or that repentance comes before faith, but that the controversy was clearly shown to be unprofitable. The only question strictly of this character, now presented for public attention, is one which Mr. Upnam raises, and, in his judgment, decides. Faith, in his philosophy, goes before love; and for this reason, which, in his view, is decisive; that on natural principles, we cannot love a being whom we do not previously believe to have good and interesting traits of character. If requested to say, how any traits of character come to appear to us good and interesting, he might perhaps find it convenient to represent the feeling which constitutes the perception or discernment of loveliness,

as not precisely love ; or, if it be love, then not love for a person ; or, if lovely traits of character be found inseparable from a person, then, while insisting that faith comes, in fact, before love, in the order of nature if not in the order of time, he might say, (and so he does say,) that it is entirely admissible to hold perfect faith and perfect love to be identical ; the two terms being only different names “ for one great phasis of experimental Christianity ;” and inasmuch as one believer may designate his experience as that of perfect faith, and another his, that of perfect love, it will often be found convenient to have two names for the same thing.

The perfectionism of this book, although, in our judgment an unscriptural and barren hypothesis, by which to investigate, judge, and explain the facts of religion in the soul of the believer, is not the fundamental fault of the work. The author might have disclaimed all belief of the doctrine of “ sanctification” in this life, without removing the pervading theological defect, which we feel anxious to expose in his production. Whether perfection be attainable or not, he will not pretend that all attain it, nor that any do at their first conversion, except in some extraordinary case : and the texture of his book throughout is wrought on the presumption that these instructions are applicable to all Christians as guides of their exertions for spiritual advancement and tests of their success. If they are found useful to those who finally obtain the higher faith, they must be used by all who seek progress. And with our present knowledge of Christianity and of man, we hold the fundamental principles of religious experience laid down in the work, to be, in the present state of human knowledge, undemonstrable, and to any valuable end, impracticable.

To illustrate : We imagine ourselves proceeding by these instructions in the administration of the gospel to a promiscuous congregation. While explaining the nature of that religion which we desire our hearers to seek, we endeavour to produce in their minds a conception of an interior or hidden life which is the superior endowment of some favorites of Christ ; and to fix the idea of that life within them as what they will endeavour, and what we propose to help their endeavour to realize. We have to make this peculiar life an object of contemplation to them, and an object of pursuit. Let a

truly philosophical practitioner with human minds estimate the difficulty of this first step of our work. But supposing this is accomplished, we then instruct them that to gain this endowment, their first work is to obtain holiness of heart ; for which purpose they must, first of all, settle in their minds that holiness is attainable ; next perform a solemn act of consecration with desire for holiness ; next, establish the unwavering conviction that the consecration is accepted of God. They have then reached the point of assurance of faith ; from which, to the point of perfect love, there is but one step, even if there be any. In this state of sinless perfection, they must still confess to God, not that they are sinners, but that they have been ; and their present failings they must for consistency, confess, not strictly as sins, but as errors of judgment ; morally wrong, indeed, yet only relatively so ; requiring atonement, indeed, yet not like voluntary transgression, tending to condemnation.

When the proper effects of the gospel, through the power of the Spirit, begin to appear in the serious and inquiring minds of our people, we converse with enquirers altogether in the language of our theory. Religion, when complete as matter of experience, we comprehend under the general denomination of interior or hidden life ; and we proceed to treat the cases of hopeful concern according to our experimental regime. The subjects, as they themselves know, are expected to answer in the affirmative, the questions, Have you obtained entire holiness of heart ? If not, have you, for the purpose of obtaining it, adopted the unwavering belief that it is attainable in this life ? Have you performed the act of entire consecration to God, never to be recalled, and have you done it with a desire for holiness ? And have you voluntarily and explicitly, renounced all doubt of your having been accepted of God in your act of consecration ? An enlightened and unbiased observer of men will, of course, be able to judge to his own satisfaction, how many reasonable and even religious considerations would prevent an intelligent, ingenuous and conscientious mind from answering these questions, perhaps, either way, but especially in the affirmative ; considerations too, which must be presumed, in a mind that wishes to know what it does and whereof it affirms, to be arguments rather in favour of its Christian virtue than against it. We can also judge for our-

selves how many people of another class, not sufficiently excited to swallow pure mysticism in the mass, and too ignorant to take direction from our theory, become bewildered in the confusion of half-formed notions, or in the darkness arising from the absence of all notions respecting our meaning and fall out of the reach of our influence. Of the rest, who compose the majority of persons brought by these means, into the church, we are left to judge as we best can, how many conclude that because they now have any experience at all it must be such as we have taught them to anticipate. Being really moved by the Spirit of God, with almost no discrimination of their own mental states, except between the agreeable and the painful, they gain the requisite facility in calling their feelings by the classical names; and in describing their experience, either follow one another, or follow their teachers. Often who are cleansed, one only stands up in the intelligence and integrity of a conscious assurance, to give glory to God.

“When it is required,” says Dr. Alexander, “in order that persons be admitted to communion, that they publicly give a narrative of the exercises of their minds, there will commonly be observed a striking similarity. There is a certain mould into which they all seem to be cast. . . . Weak and ignorant persons often profess to be happy, and to be full of the love of God when they know not what they say. . . . They know what kind of answers is expected of them, and they come as near as they can to what is wished.” These remarks assert the tendency of human nature, under the most prudent instruction; and this tendency is powerfully assisted by such kinds of systematic instruction on religious experience as we have now before us. The work to which our attention has been directed partakes of these detrimental properties, as it seems to us, in an extreme degree. It is not at all wonderful that great numbers of people of intelligence and piety, lay very little stress on formal examination with reference to past experience as evidence of personal religion. It may help to ascertain the individual’s present state of mind, and that end is equally attained whether the story of the past experience be of one sort or another.

The grand difficulty lies in applying abstract tests of religious feeling. It is found no less in the use of the tests of President

Edwards with the exception of the twelfth sign, than in the use of any others. What satisfaction can we obtain by asking a candidate for admission to the church whether his affections are such as indicate a change of nature, or whether he has only experienced such a change in his feelings as mere natural affections may undergo? What can we gain by asking the person who professes to love divine things, whether he loves them for the beauty and sweetness of the things themselves, or only for some advantage sought from loving them? Not to stop here to expose the nonsense of talking about loving a thing for the beauty, and sweetness, and excellence of it, rather than for some other reason; while beauty, sweetness, excellence, are nothing but correlatives of love; being inconceivable and indescribable without it; we would further ask what can any examiner expect from enquiring into the symmetry and harmony of the affections of a convert: whether he is as humble as he is joyful, and whether his faith, and hope, and love, and zeal are properly balanced in his mind? How would any supposable inequality be selected by the subject, and suppose either principle were detected in comparative excess, what judgment should we pronounce upon it as a Christian grace? Ask him whether his affections are spiritual and not carnal, that is to say whether they originate in a divine influence or only in the influence of some created things. Questions of this sort occasion the exhibition of the present state of mind as to knowledge of doctrine, and in the case of honest and communicative persons, the prevailing temper towards Christianity; but in ordinary cases do they go farther? We do not disparage conversation on all these matters for Christian communion and edification; but we question their validity, as formal and rational tests of the religious experience. Besides, all these questions involve points which very few Christians, even among those of very high attainments in religion, are found ready at any period of their life to decide, if left to the unbiased course of their own thoughts under the influence of the scriptures, and without a disposition to prejudge the matter by an adopted theory. The bold and glaring marks of hypocrisy are obvious even to the hypocrite himself, as his very name implies; and these are the marks which Flavel most pointedly applies in his "Touchstone of Sincerity."

Flavel's Touchstone commends itself to thousands who can make no profitable use whatever of the tests of President Edwards, or the theory of Mr. Upham. Flavel waits and watches to see the effects of prosperity, &c., of adversity, of all worldly influences, of indwelling sin, upon the comfort and behaviour of his professors; and if through the trials they manifest the gospel spirit, and hold fast their profession to the end, he accounts them sincere. But the other examiners would still come after him, and put us upon deciding by direct and immediate self-inspection, whether the fair appearances during and after the trial, be not the specious and refined imitations of Christian virtue produced in the secret laboratory of self love.

We have no theory of religious experience of our own to offer. It is true, indeed, that the rudiments of theory respecting all matters of careful observation, reside in every thinking mind. No intelligent observer of any phenomena thinks much and rationally on what he sees, without the rise of some conceptions which bind together sundry facts of his observation, present them in some mutual relation, and reduce his diverse impressions to the mental form to which we give the name of knowledge. In other words, every thinking man has a theory respecting every thing he truly thinks of. And by the accumulation of just and clear observations and the steady and constant application of thought, by suggesting hypothesis, and rejecting or retaining them as our facts direct, we mature and establish our theories, and command for them in due time and under the proper conditions, the approbation of mankind.

Such is yet to be the fact on the subject of religious experience. But this subject belongs to the department of metaphysics. It is exclusively a branch of the science of mind; and is not otherwise connected with the holy scriptures, than as those scriptures present some examples of the facts to which the science must resort for the suggestion and the verification of its laws. But the true science of metaphysics is not yet born. The age has for some time seemed pregnant with it; we witness occasional and effective throes of parturition and really believe the birth is at hand. The triumphant emergence of several branches of physical science from darkness into noon-day light, gives promise on behalf of all the sciences which

can engage the thoughts of man ; most of all on behalf of the absorbing and sublime science of human nature. When the facts of the mind shall be observed with that comprehensive and minute observation, and that clear discrimination, which result from rigid discipline in the most profound branches of physics, we may begin to expect some felicitous conception of a truly scientific mind, which will supply the bond of union among our facts, and gradually commend itself to all seekers for truth, as the law of the phenomena. At present we have neither the facts nor the conceptions. We have no conceptions in metaphysics, which correspond with the conception of force in mechanics, or that of polarity in chemistry ; and as to our discrimination of facts it is sufficient to refer, as a sign of its imperfection, to the questions continually agitated in theology respecting the facts of faith, conscience, will ; and in mental philosophy, even those which are ascribed to memory.

But when, if ever, the true theory comes, it will lend no aid to the experience of religion in the heart. It may prevent the unprofitable direction of the thoughts of religious people, and the misdirection of their feelings, by removing in part from enlightened teachers the incitements of zeal for false and seductive systems ; but it will have no place among the proper means of religious instruction. Religion in the soul of man is exclusively the work of God ; though not in such sense as denies the intervention of means, yet strictly in such sense as implies independence on them. And the means of the work of God in the heart, even the means of producing assurance of faith and perfect love, consist in a far lower degree than we are wont to suppose, of our doctrines of ability or of inability, of our theories of consecration and assurance, and even of the form and ceremonies of our spiritual worship. They consist of the holding forth of Christ crucified for us. We shall think on these subjects. We shall investigate their nature and relations until we arrive at established truth respecting them ; and we may yet have our views so improved concerning the relation of all that is metaphysical and physical connected with religion, that we shall find fewer occasions of sectarian division, and less provocation to brand any communion of professed believers with our anathemas.