

THE
MERCERSBURG QUARTERLY REVIEW.

APRIL, 1855.

ART. I.—SKETCHES OF A TRAVELER FROM GREECE, CONSTANTINO-
PLE, ASIA MINOR, SYRIA AND PALESTINE.

IV. THE HARBORS AND NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE ANCIENT
ATHENIANS—THE MODERN PEIRÆEUS.

Earlier erroneous views on the subject—Important discoveries made—Description of the Munychian Peninsula—The three Athenian Galley ports: The Peiræus—Zea—Munychia—The true site of Phaleros—Ancient History of the Peiræus—The Peiraic and Phaleric Long Walls—The third wall of Perikles—Inscriptions of the walls; of the fleet—Kantharos—Hippodamean Market-place—Emporium—Deigma—Arsenal of Pheilon—Castle of Munychia—Solon—Stadium—Theatre—Temples—Serangeion—Thieves and Swindlers—Pikrokrene near the Phreattys—Sepulchre of Themistokles—Of Admiral Miaulis—Burial grounds—Excavations—Athenian Widow—Sarcophagi—Modern History of the Peiræus—Karaïskakis—His death—Defeat of the Greeks—Churches—Military College of the Euelpides—American Mission School—Quarantine—Wharfs—Scenery—Commerce—Prosperity of the ancient Republic—Departure of the Sicilian fleet—Its destruction and decline of Athens.

HAVING given a sketch of the Akropolis and its Sanctuaries in the preceding number of the Review, we shall, in the present, invite the attention of the readers to another subject—not of art and ornament—but of practical utility, and of the highest importance with regard to the rapid and gigantic development of the ancient Athenian Republic—the harbors, naval and commercial establishments at the Peiræus and the other subjacent ports on the coast of Attica.

when Fire even was shown to be unable to accomplish this result. And thus, in fact, must it ever be, so long as the present laws, governing created matter, are permitted to have power over it; and *when* this power ceases, and only *then*, shall Matter yield to anything like a destructive tendency,—Fire being selected by the Creative Power as the grand agent for destroying “the old things” of this World, and making way for the more brilliant and more durable things of that New World, whose limits can only be embraced in the idea of Eternity.

Washington City, D. C.

L. H. S.

ART. V.—THE MORAL QUALITY OF CONSCIENTIOUS ERROR.

WHEN a man feels any compunction for wrong doing and is not quite ready to confess, he can sometimes find a sort of relief in the false plea of sincerity and a clear conscience in his deed. There is often great effort to make that appear good which the heart feels to be evil; to justify what one secretly knows to be error or vice. The scriptures speak of men who call evil good, and good evil; who put light for darkness and darkness for light. And there is probably not even a Christian in the world who would not sometimes rather extenuate his infirmity than confess it, and frequently use the plea of sincerity and good intention as a cloak for real sin.

This trait of human nature appears on every page of the moral history of man. Sincerity in error, conscientious wrong doing, sincerely believing, at one time, what is rejected at another as false; conscientiously doing, at one time, what at another is lamented and abhorred; all this can be recognized everywhere as characteristic of the moral infirmity of man.

There never was a stronger case of this sort than that of Saul of Tarsus. In his Christian review of his career in the Jewish religion, he freely claims for himself the most religious and conscientious intentions, as a persecutor of the Church. "I verily thought with myself that I ought—" But he now wishes to hold up that error of his benighted and misguided conscience as one of the greatest aggravations of his Jewish unbelief. "I am the least of all the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." "It pleased God in his mercy towards me, who was before a persecutor and injurious, to put me into the ministry." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

This error and repentance of Paul presents an important point in Christian casuistry, to wit: The moral quality of conscientious error. It offers a test of some of the common ways of avoiding self-reproach, and the reproach of the world. It shows the real character of some devices much relied on in the conflict of opinions, and commonly allowed to govern controversy as with the force of a divine law. When one would fortify his opinion by the vehement assertion of sincerity, or justify his deed by the assertion of a good conscience, it is well for him to consider the moral value of that sort of defence.

From the first appearance of Saul of Tarsus in the history of the Church, till his meeting with Jesus on the way to Damascus, he never wavers in his belief or falters in his action. He seems not a whit more distrustful of his rectitude as a bigoted and persecuting Jew, than afterwards as an humble and persecuted Christian. His judgment in this matter will seem to any reflecting mind entitled to great consideration. It was pronounced against his former self, in what he considered his better state of mind. It is the decision of an enlightened mind accustomed to reflection, just released from the strong prejudices of his early education. Above all, it is a judgment formed under the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord. Every

thing which can give one man's opinion influence with another contributes to make this judgment of the apostle against his former sincere and conscientious course, a solemn caution to all. It warns men not to count themselves innocent in error, though they hold it with all sincerity, nor guiltless in wrong doing, though they do wrong with good conscience. The apostle did not expect that on account of his sincerity and good conscience as a Jew, his error would avail for him as truth, and his vice as virtue.

Impunity in error on account of conscious sincerity is nowhere suggested in the Scriptures. In denouncing woes against those who call evil good, and good evil, the Bible makes no such distinction between the honestly deluded and the wilfully perverse, as between righteous and wicked. The deceiver and the deceived fall alike under the demands of justice; the difference between them lying not in the fact of corruption and guilt, but in the *degree* of responsibility for pernicious influence. The woman could say, "the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;" yet her being a victim of deceit did not save her from the doom of a sinner. The Bible never countenances sins of ignorance. It reproves and denounces all who do not earnestly and diligently seek for truth, condemns them for their errors, and warns them of punishment. It forbids an indolent repose in falsehood, and a heedless indulgence in lawful deeds. The lenity of God towards sins of ignorance is no remission of the sins. The doom of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment will be dreadful; only that of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum will be still more dreadful. God winked at the times of ignorance and required less in them than in times of greater light, yet the ignorant people perished in their lack of knowledge. He that knoweth not his Lord's will and doeth things worthy of stripes is beaten with fewer stripes indeed, yet he is beaten. Thus believers of falsehood and workers of iniquity, although, through ignorance, ever so sincere, find no justification in the Scriptures. They are left to a doom only less terrible than that of those who sinned with better knowledge.

What is thus taught by the example of Paul and the tenor

of the Scriptures, is confirmed by the natural and manifest preference of the human mind for truth and right. It is as contrary to nature that a man should be happy in believing falsehood and working iniquity, as that he should take pleasure in bodily disease. Falsehood and wickedness are poison to the mind ; producing, first, disgust, then disease and death. The motive for receiving false doctrine and running into vicious ways, is never a healthy desire for truth and love of duty. In whatever light it may be viewed, or by whatever name called, it is only a moral disease. It is no more evident that the body is to live by bread, than that the soul is to live by truth and virtue. No doubt the desire for truth and our satisfaction in attaining it, are the greater from our knowing it to be useful to our future welfare. But even when we read or hear with the idlest curiosity, is it all the same to us whether the story be true or false ? Though the counterfeit and the genuine appear alike to the eye, are they alike to the inward sense ? Would you have the same pleasure in a perfect imitation of the autograph of your friend as in the autograph itself ? When the builder tries to imitate marble in some inferior material, his very effort to deceive the eye signifies his preference for the reality, and his discontent with the least disagreement between the representation and the fact. How would mankind bear the loss of all truth from the world ; the truth relating to science and art, and to the origin, character and destiny of our race.

The very existence of science proves the affinity of the human mind for truth. The astronomer can rest in no theories but such as will account for the facts. Witness the universal agreement in receiving the theory of gravitation. The astronomer has found his heaven of truth on that point, and there he abides. No false supposition could supply the place of truth. The mind must find no rest in falsehood, and whenever it allows itself to repose in error, it receives damage to its character and its welfare. The more sincere in such error the worse ; for sincerity in such a state is only another name for prejudice, which prevents all learning, and determines not only against other views, but against all inquiry into the correctness of one's

own opinions. We have thus in the nature of man a strong ground of presumption that contentedness or what is commonly called sincerity in error and wrong doing, must result in evil to the interests of men, or in other words, is of the nature of sin and must bring its punishment.

This presumption is confirmed by the course of the divine government in the world. The heathens are sincere in their blind credulity, and as conscientious in their vices, as men deluded and depraved can ever be. The Christian world believes that they know no better. Yet they live always under the frown of God. Their iniquities are constantly visited upon them. *Because* they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, therefore, God gave them over to a penal debasement of the understanding and the heart; to absurd and degrading practices; to unnatural affections; to pernicious institutions, domestic and civil; to brutal customs and habits; to utter despair respecting a happy life to come. They are children of wrath, living the most revolting and deplorable of all conceivable conditions of humanity on earth. God thus declares his judgment that they which commit such things are worthy of death. Their miserable slavery to superstition and vice is the penalty of their sincere adherence to falsehood; that is, their hearty whole-souled self-surrendering to delusion. And then the Lord aggravates their misery by special visitations. His command to exterminate the aborigines of Palestine was given with terrible denunciations of their character and deeds. He taught the Hebrews to execrate those heathens; and gave them fearful warning, that all who adopted the falsehood and the vices of the heathens must drink also the cup of their misery. All Christendom surveys the dark abodes of paganism with pity for their desolation, with shame for our nature and with dread of the justice of God. And as for their sincerity and earnestness, in their way, we all admit that such sincerity and earnestness, or such decision and firmness in the way of truth and virtue, would raise them to the sphere of a glorious and happy life.

Now, if error, with sincerity and wrong doing with good conscience, could ever avail as truth and virtue, would they have so darkened and wasted the heritage of the heathen. Why do

not lies and fables, received with all the heart for want of better knowledge, do the work of truth on those people ; unfolding in them true moral beauty and dignity, and yielding the fruit of pure blessedness ? Why do not the moral sentiments of our nature there blossom with pure social affection, and ripen into permanent social order and prosperity ? If merit can go with sincerity apart from truth, and with good conscience apart from virtue, why does not this sometimes appear in providential retribution ? Why is it that no profusion of the gifts of providence can ever so combine with the errors and vices of paganism as to produce the general improvement and happiness of the people ? If the Lord does really intend that ignorance shall neutralize error, and that self-delusion shall justify vice, how can he thus allow the course of his providence to contradict the law of his mouth.

Again, in the mental state of a man who cleaves to error and vice, we discern the property of evil which no sincerity can change or remove. It is a state of depravation, which has in itself the nature of sin. It is not an incapacity for perfect knowledge, the mere finiteness of the understanding. Error is not imperfect knowledge. Angels and saints in heaven, all earnest, docile students of the world and the works of God, are limited in knowledge, and differ in degrees of knowledge among themselves ; yet are not chargeable with error. Their views are finite, but not therefore false. As they witness the progressive unfolding of the scheme of God and "desire to look into" the mysteries of redemption ; and behold in their heavenly spheres the successive demonstrations of the manifold wisdom of God, their knowledge receives enlargement, but not correction. What they now know is true, and agrees with what they have to learn. Their progress is not putting truth for falsehood, but adding truth to truth. The student of language may know little at first, but know that little rightly. He may know the nature and powers of the letters, their true pronunciation in syllables and words ; and many other such things, yet have little command of the language as an expression of thought. The student of natural philosophy may learn much that is true of the office and laws of light, yet have much

to learn of the invisible agencies employed in producing its effects. The science of astronomy began with the observation of facts, which indeed were as widely and as truly known at first as they are now ; but it was long before those sublime views of the celestial worlds were obtained, which all future observations rather promise to corroborate than threaten to disturb.

But when the inquirer becomes the dogmatist, declares his fancy as doctrine, demands for it the homage of others, makes conscience of guarding it against the disclosures of clearer light, and shuts himself up in his cell of bigotry, he turns his imperfect knowledge into offensive and pernicious error. In such a state of mind truth itself loses its value. It is truth held in unrighteousness. It is degraded from the purity of a divine excellence into a low and dark conception of an impure mind. Though the man has the truth in a logical form in his thoughts, he does not know it as truth in his heart. He only asserts it as an opinion, and as such only it serves him. His mental conformation is vicious. His arrogance, self-confidence, and self-conceit are enmity against the truth, as truth ; and favor it only as his own opinion.

Had Des Cartes, amidst the grand scientific movement of his age, asserted his theory of vortices, with dogmatic assurance, falsified observation to verify his doctrine, and distorted or rejected irreconcilable facts, he would have been inwardly wrong ; and his theory would have had none of the virtue of truth for him ; not even though in the hands of Newton, that same theory might have been demonstrated as the true doctrine of the solar system. But holding the theory as a hypothesis for explaining the planetary system, waiting to see whether the facts of the heavenly motions would fall together under it into unity, or whether it would be found to have no practical value, except, perhaps, as a hint towards the discovery of the true doctrine, he was on the right track as an inquirer, his theory was no fixture in his mind, had nothing of the nature of error, and wrought none of its mischief. His mental process was like one of the tentative steps of the student in finding the common measure of several quantities, when he drops his assumed measure the instant he comes to a quantity which it will

not divide. The state of mind is not only faultless but eminently praiseworthy ; the posture of a learner. The hypothesis is his post of observation, till he sees whether he can command, from it, the known facts of the case. If he fails with his supposition he moves, with infinite facility, from that to another more promising, not as forsaking, but as seeking his resting place in truth.

The application of these remarks to the science of religious truth is obvious ; and it commends to the serious consideration of all Christian people, the question whether any man can really hold erroneous doctrine, except as the victim of a guilty perverseness. Pride, vanity, avarice, ambition, with their progeny of partialities and antipathies for persons and things, inflame the selfish heart with zeal for an opinion ; and when robed in the sanctity of a religious profession, conceal their motions, if not wholly from the public eye, yet commonly from the eye of the errorist himself. Thus, what passes with him for the greater sincerity is only the deeper delusion, and more hopeless obliquity of the understanding and the heart ; and so far from extenuating the guilt of his error, becomes its chief aggravation.

The state of the mind in holding error, is opposed to that knowledge which is offered as a part of the chief good of human nature ; and herein it appears intrinsically evil.

The real happiness of man flourishes in true knowledge, as vegetation in light ; and when the intellectual powers do not find their health and satisfaction in the clear path of truth, but rest in some plausible and favorite form of falsehood, "they altogether become unprofitable." We do not mean that any given amount of speculative knowledge is necessary to the existence or the peaceful exercise of a pious faith. We are far from imputing the rise and progress of the life of God in the soul to the working of the speculative reason. Yet we know and must always remember, that the intellectual faculty claims a most important office in the simplest intuitions of pious faith. Hence it is that so many intelligent Christians, like Calvin, judging from their own experience, define faith by the term knowledge ; and that the Scriptures inculcate the religion of

faith as a religion of knowledge ; " to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." The understanding resorts to the living waters, rejoices in their exhilarating virtue, and even delights to sink the lead with all its line of devout contemplation, into their ocean depths.

But if, by any evil affection, this knowing faculty be turned from the path of truth, the aberration is so much departure from the way of life for man. There must then be a shortcoming in the religious culture, and the harvest of spiritual enjoyment is proportionately lessened. The right operations of reason on the genuine matter of the Christian faith multiply the blessed fruits of that faith in the experience of individuals, and in the social improvement of mankind. Whatever prevents these fruits, deprives the man of his highest and purest happiness in the present, and turns him from the path to his highest glory in the future. It is evil, and only evil continually. No sincerity, no conformity of the reason or the conscience to such a state of the mind can change it from evil to good.

The intuitions of simple faith in all true believers are essentially alike ; for the human element in them springs from the same nature in all, and the divine element is from the one Holy Spirit in all. Hence all true Christians agree in those great fundamental truths of our holy religion which are reached by immediate spiritual discernment and not by ratiocination. Now so far as the speculations of reason confound the intuitions of faith, and darken the immediate spiritual vision of divine things, they frustrate the beneficent office of faith, and consign the believer to darkness and distraction. This unavoidable part of the penalty of error, weighs heavily on the Church in her earthly imperfection. It is the want of a free acquiescence of enlightened and active thought in the things which are freely given unto us of God in the Holy Scriptures, and which are spiritually discerned ; a lack of lively enjoyment in the convalescence of the understanding from the disorder it has suffered in common with the other faculties of the sinful soul. No man can find in error the joy of intellectual reconciliation to God ; a joy which must always increase with the ever deeper and sweeter harmony between right reason and pure faith ; but on

the contrary, the most specious falsehood, in the sincerest and most earnest mind, precludes the spiritual joy and peace of believing, and yields only the low and momentary pleasure of a logical satisfaction.

Since then the only harbor for error is a mental depravation which is itself a part of human sin, and opposes the attainment of our highest good, it follows that the sincerest belief of falsehood is only the most deep-rooted and desperate opposition to truth arising from a wicked heart; that exposure to error is an infirmity connected with all sin, that all should recognize this failing in themselves, and make it a matter of daily humiliation and repentance.

Again, that error and wrong doing should be excused on account of sincerity, is forbidden by the nature and office of the law which they violate.

The law of universal order fits every creature to its place, reduces all to system, and makes the universe, as its name imports, a unit. All sin is a transgression of this law of universal order. The transgressor leaves his place in the system. A wheel in the machine is displaced or broken. A member of the body is lost, or forsakes its proper office and usurps another, as if the foot should claim to be the hand, or the hand the eye. Thus man, in his transgression, left his place in the holy ministry of nature, and exalted himself in the pride of his heart, to be as God. The correspondence of things is now impaired. The Creator and the creature no longer live in harmony. If other creatures remain as they were, the fallen creature finds himself in conflict with all; and must both do and suffer violence.

Now, for the suffering arising from this disorder, there is no alleviation in the fullest confidence of sincerity and a good conscience; but whenever men offend against this law of order, they have, in the course of nature, their reward. Agriculture, guided by false views of the laws of vegetation, brings only loss of labor, and disappointment of hope. And neither the loss nor the disappointment finds any relief or compensation in the sincerity or honesty of the mistake. The honest and earnest mechanic, though believing with all his heart that his machine

when finished, will move itself forever, receives, with all his sincerity, the full recompense for his mechanical sin, in the loss of his time and labor, and the mortification of seeing his machine stand still ; and if, in his self-conceit, he hated instruction from the demonstrations of science, and chose to purchase knowledge by prodigal and ruinous experiment, he must drink the full cup of self-reproach and of bitter repentance for his error. If education has been pursued in ignorance or disregard of the laws of the mind, the victim of the mistake, notwithstanding the utmost sincerity, is cast into the prison of his inferior estate, and there, in the failure of aspiring endeavors, in the diminished esteem of his fellows, and the conscious lack of qualifications for usefulness and honor, he must pay the very last mite.

This law of order prevails likewise in the spiritual kingdom, and requires, in every man, the adjustment of thought, feeling and action to his relations. He must love God with all the heart, and his neighbor as himself. To fail in this is to work iniquity; that is, to violate equity, to disturb the mutual agreement of things. His correction would be a reconciliation, a return to peace. This constitutes the redemption through Christ. The man in his sin finds himself also in misery ; and the faith wrought in the sinner by the Holy Ghost, consists of that mental state which fits the sinner's relations to God and all creatures, which harmonizes with all, prepares the man to enjoy the presence of God, and receive good from all things. But while the discord remains, what can prevent its grating on his ear ? O wretched man that he is, who shall deliver him, though he plead his sincerity, and insist that he verily thought he was doing God service ? Where, in the experience of mankind or the teaching of the Bible, do we find a hint, that a man may hope to escape the penalty of disturbing the spiritual order of the world, because he did the violence in the sincerity of his heart and with a good conscience ?

The experience of the Church is one connected and complete demonstration of what we are endeavoring to show. When one portion of the Church conceives the doctrines of the gospel, and maintains the exercise of the religious life in a con-

fused connexion with dreams of superstition, or with bondage to unprofitable and bewildering forms, there is no refuge from the penalty in the plea of sincerity, or of a conscientious desire to pursue the right ; but long ages of the world bear witness, how a penal degeneracy in the Church has followed her most earnest holding of the truth in such unrighteousness. When another portion works all its warm intuitions of faith into cold propositions of science, makes the kingdom of heaven a mere intellectual structure, and judges of religious character only by the dogmatical test, she receives in her body that recompense of her error which is meet, in the weakened and sundered bond of charity among the members, in grievous alienations and distractions, and in the exposure of "the multitude of sins" which the wars of opinion and passion always nourish, but never hide.

Another portion, with sincere desire to do good, give up all faith in the saving operation of the Spirit under the laws of the covenant of grace, and endeavor to promote the kingdom of God among men by "observation" of the sudden and promiscuous changes which appear in persons under peculiar external circumstances and measures artfully arranged by human device ; and the full penalty of such departure from the way of the Lord is suffered in the long and often final alienation from religion and its ordinances, of multitudes whom a right discipline and culture would have kept in reconciliation with them, and under their sanctifying power ; and in the malformation of religious character in those who make profession of Christian piety. And the consequence is all the worse, the greater the sincerity and confidence with which such deviations are pursued.

The prevailing distractions of the Church are a cause of deep affliction to all pious people who allow themselves to dwell upon them. The one Church, the body of Christ, does not, in her outward form, fairly express her inward unity. All feel the inconsistency between the true theory of Christian unity, and this actual disunion. It is lamented as a reproach to religion. It is a grievous stumbling block to many serious and observant people of the world. Christian people of all sects find

some of the strongest temptations to evil affections in these divisions and rivalries of the Church. These antagonisms hinder the fair exhibition of the gospel, and provoke to the distortion of truth, through zeal for the interest of the sect. They produce confusion in the work of missions. They create immense difficulties in supplying religious instruction to feeble and scattered communities who cannot harmonize in religious faith or worship. And they prevent the formation of a symmetrical religious character in individuals.

Now to inquire into the mental conditions of these divisions seems altogether reasonable, and indeed the bounden duty of those who are mainly responsible for the evil. We are aware of the prevailing disposition to apologize for these sectarian rivalries by referring to the increased energy of the sects in promoting their separate interests, and to the various advantages of mutual emulation; and all the results are accounted as good. There is not due allowance made for the corruption which vitiates all good works provoked in this way. But such apologies are very much weakened by considering the real state of mind in which these divisions originate. And we have accomplished this end when we have gained full possession of the thought that error finds no shelter in the plea of sincerity, and a good conscience.

There is no denomination of Christians on earth whose system of doctrine as a whole is right. The doctrines of each sect seem to itself nearest right; but for any denomination to set up its own system of religious faith and practice as perfect, and incapable of amendment, would shock the Christian sense of propriety in the whole protestant Church. This is one of the arrogant, heaven-daring sins which protestants abhor in the papal Church. There is certainly imperfection in the creed and discipline of every branch of the Church. It is greater, of course, than any one is aware of; although no one is obliged to admit that all the objections of the others against its system are valid; or even that any of them are so in the form in which they are urged. For every objector finds fault with his neighbor's system only in defence of his own. We shall all doubtless see in the clearer light that is coming, that while our views

of truth and rules of discipline may have done us all good service in their way and for the time, still, compared with the absolute standard, they were, like the laws of the Church, gone before us, "laws that were not good and statutes by which we should not live;" and that they were allowed us for the time, and were suited to our case, "on account of the hardness of our hearts." All this must be conceded according to our own protestant principles. We can admit this without detriment to our character and progress. Indeed, it is *one* true mark of a Church of Jesus Christ that we confess error and sin, and look and long for improvement.

It is one of the objects of our foregoing discussion to trace some outlines of that mental state which naturally accompanies our divisions, and indeed, which must now be considered their chief support. We have different views of religious truth. These differences, it is a great part of our study to illustrate and maintain. Great labor is bestowed to make them prominent. In many cases they are exaggerated to extremes. It is no part of our natural tendency to discover and commend the mutual affinities of our sectarian views; but every sect is interested to magnify the diversity; to exaggerate the repugnance between its own and others' doctrine, and make the views of others as abhorrent as possible to the Christian sense of its own members. In this operation the natural stimulants of mutual antagonism are very powerful; and what should be pure Christian zeal, glowing with meek and charitable devotion to the truth and its friends, degenerates at once into the natural spirit of the party.

If the great evil of our sects in the Church be at present incurable, it may, perhaps, be slightly mitigated. At least, the moral sense of Christian people may be quickened to discern the evil, and to disallow it; and we may be spared the mortifying obtrusion of elaborate apologies for disunion, which may be reckoned among the curiosities of protestant literature. For we have heard and read not a little of the advantages of divisions in the Church. Alas, that our Christian spirit is so earthly, that it can taste the stimulus of such low rivalry without disgust. Could we silence some of the excuses which would

make their authors ashamed in the light of a true Christian unity, we should be better prepared to estimate our present imperfections and to consult upon the means of removing them.

With the views above given of the moral quality of conscientious error, we do not honor any man's integrity the more for his swearing by his conscience, nor receive his doctrine the sooner for his swearing by his honest belief. His oath betrays him. His conscience is only an agent of his will. His sincerity is set as the bulwark of his prejudice. He fears for his own weakness, and suspects the approach of some doctrine or usage stronger than his own; and he calls upon his conscience for security instead of asking her guidance to the impregnable fortress of truth. Hence it is that different men can believe opposite doctrines with what they call equal sincerity and follow opposite courses of moral conduct with equal purity of conscience. Their oath shows that their attachment to their practice is not from any impulse of the conscience at all. Neither does their adhesion to an opinion spring at all from the sincerity and earnestness of their minds. But another principle, different entirely from an earnest and humble persuasion of the truth, binds them to their opinion or their usage, with a force which they, under their peculiar circumstances, are unfitted to detect. A dispute between such minds can seldom go on long without personal alienation. Mutual hatred, and not conscientious devotion to the truth, becomes a ruling reason for separation, or if separation already exists, a reason for embittered antagonism.

The separation of Christians from one another for opinion's sake is of the nature of an oath upon one's conscience or honesty. It is a form of asserting a sincere and conscientious belief of a doctrine or obligation to a practice connected with religion. It is refusing for conscience sake to hold fellowship with those who think and speak differently from ourselves on particular points; which points are on all hands conceded as not involving the saving truth of the gospel. It is one of the forms of demanding respect for our opinions, to eschew fellowship with a Christian brother who refuses or hesitates to adopt them. The mental frame at the bottom of this separation is

even more exceptionable than the mere assertion of opinion upon honor or conscience. For men become at once committed and bound to one another to maintain an opinion or a practice as theirs, and to guard it against all exposure to the light which might test its truth or righteousness. They join hands to defend their prejudice. Inquiry is at an end. Their dogma is settled. Nothing further is to be learned. To betray a desire after another argument for the dogma of the sect would provoke suspicion and reproach. Free thought is unsafe. The mind is sold into bondage. The lips can say only *Sibboleth*, and must never try to pronounce it otherwise. And it forthwith becomes a part of the religious culture, in one view, to hold the members of other sects as aliens, and, in another, to regard them with charity as brethren.

All views of truth and duty must be taken from the position of the sect. The distinguishing dogma must not be looked at by its own advocates from another direction. All the religious teaching must have the sectarian complexion. The Protestant must witness no Catholic worship; the Catholic, no Protestant. The Calvinist must receive no Arminian instruction; the Arminian, no Calvinistic. To approve the proceedings of another sect seems like becoming reconciled to heresy. To prefer the practices or views of another in any particular to our own, would be taken as treachery or apostacy. The rivalry for advancement is rather a mutual opposition, than a mutual incitement to good works; and the gain of the one is commonly viewed as the loss of the other. These phenomena are, indeed, greatly modified by the Christian conscience which more or less prevails throughout; but the remaining depravity of the Christian heart takes great advantage from these sectarian occasions, against the cause of pure truth, and all the good principles of the new man. This condition of the Church can only be viewed as the fruit of her inward infirmity; and it is a condition of organized and strong temptation in which she is prone, rather to excuse or even justify that infirmity, than to deplore and labor to remove it.

Something, therefore, is gained for progress in the right direction, when we give earnest attention to this feature of our

religious state, and to the nature of the evil from which it arises. Beyond all doubt, the present divided condition of the Church is incidental to her progress from the darkness and bondage of an apparently slumbering and stagnant age. It comes from the free motion of the waters of salvation as they flow from the vast lake of medieval inactivity through the rough channel of free but ill regulated thought, towards the brighter and serener clime of the future, where they are again to rest, having deposited all their impurities along their turbulent course. But at present they are certainly dark with earthy matter. The distractions of Protestantism are not of the Father, but of the world. They come from the lusts which war in the members of the Church; and while their appearance may be welcome as a needful discharge from the inward ulcer of sin, and may promise relief in the end, they yet reveal the deep and terrible disorder within. And since all Christians know the law of perfect unity to be holy, and the commandment holy and just and good, this vehement rising of the law of disunion in their members against the law of union in their mind, might seem enough to make the sin of our divisions become exceeding sinful. It will certainly be so as the time of reformation draws near. Let the Church look sometimes at this. Let brethren who lead the flock of Christ turn an occasional and solemn glance at our position, and consider whether these are the still waters beside which the Great Shepherd has ordered his flock to be led. And if the body of Christ has reached the stage of convalescence where this grievous deformity is ready to disappear, it will show the preparation by a growing and mournful sympathy with such reflections as we have here suggested.

Danville, Pa.

J. W. Y.