

go to his relief when the wolf came. This habit has also a very bad moral bearing. Our words have a reflex influence upon our characters. Exaggerated speech makes one careless of the truth. The habit of using words without regard to their rightful meaning, often leads one to distort facts, to misreport conversations, and to magnify statements, in matters in which the literal truth is important to be told. You can never trust the testimony of one who in common conversation is indifferent to the import, and regardless of the power, of words. I am acquainted with persons whose representations of facts always need translation and correction, and who have utterly lost their reputation for veracity, solely through this habit of overstrained and extravagant speech. They do not mean to lie; but they have a dialect of their own, in which words bear an entirely different sense from that given them in the daily intercourse of discreet and sober people.—A. P. Peabody.

CHANNING'S CHILDHOOD.

"I can remember," says Channing, "an incident in my childhood, which has given a turn to my whole life and character. I found a nest of birds in my father's field, which held four young ones. They had no down when I first discovered them. They opened their little mouths as if they were hungry, and I gave them some crumbs which were in my pocket. Every day I returned to feed them. As soon as school was done, I would run home for some bread, and sit by the nest to see them eat, for an hour at a time. They were now feathered, and almost ready to fly. When I came one morning, I found them all cut up into quarters. The grass round the nest was red with blood. Their little limbs were raw and bloody. The mother was on a tree, and the father on the wall, mourning for their young. I cried, myself, for I was a child. I thought, too, that the parents looked on me as the author of their miseries, and this made me still more unhappy. I wanted to undeceive them. I wanted to sympathize with and comfort them. When I left the field, they followed me with their eyes, and with mournful reproaches. I was too young, and too sincere in my grief, to make any apostrophes. But I can never forget my feelings. The impression will never be worn away, nor can I ever cease to abhor every species of inhumanity toward inferior animals."

To educate a child is an office of which no one, taking the Christian view, can think lightly. To administer perceptions, and unfold the faculties in their season and proportion; to give power to the affections, without impairing their symmetry; to develop, in their right order, and to their full intensity, the great ideas of duty and of God; to exhibit human virtues and relations in so beautiful an aspect, that the soul may pass from them with ease to the venerating love of the Infinite Mind, is a task of responsibility so solemn, as to invest every parent's life with the sanctity of a divine mission.

If the philosopher's doctrine had been the true one, and the soul had been like a bird fallen from the skies,—its plumage soiled in the dust, and its forces drooping in our heavier air,—it would seem a cruel office to stimulate it to ascend again, by convulsive efforts to an element native, but natural no more. But as the truth really stands, we have not to provoke a strength jaded and expiring, but to aid and develop one that is half formed; ourselves to bear it awhile into the heights "as upon eagle's wings," and then launch it from the precipice alone, to sweep down the gale, and soar into the light it loves.—Martineau.



MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1848.

PROTESTANTISM.

[Concluded from our last.]

To all who feel any interest in protecting the rights of the human mind from the usurpations alike of Church and State—to all who feel an interest in the progress of pure Christian truth, and enlightened Christian virtue—to all who feel any interest in seeing Christianity freed from the multiplied abuses and antiquated errors which have become incorporated along with it—to all who desire to witness the advancement of the human race in the appreciation of the exalted spiritual truths of Christ's most holy Gospel; to all such, it will appear a matter of the first importance that the fundamental principle of the

Reformation—the full right of private judgment—be kept distinctly in view. We contend for this, as the one thing needful—as the pearl of great price—as the corner stone of our Christian liberty—as that, without which, the Reformation was but a mockery, and Protestantism but a name. As an authoritative guide in moral truths and Christian verities, we have no more confidence in an English Monarch than in a Roman Pontiff. We see not how infallibility can reside in the archiepiscopal palace of Canterbury any more than in the chambers of the Vatican at Rome—in a convocation at Lambeth, any more than in a Council at Trent. It is to be lamented that any attempts should be made in these days to obscure the first principles of the Reformation, or explain away all proper meaning out of it. On what grounds can any man, or body of men claim to direct authoritatively in matters of faith? Is it in virtue of the unbroken historical antiquity of their ecclesiastical organization? Then we must yield to Rome. Is it in virtue of superior numbers? On this ground, also, we should be compelled to yield to Rome. Is it in virtue of their greater learning, wisdom, and piety? Then we are called upon to ascertain the soundness of this prior claim, which rests less upon indisputable facts, than upon simple opinion. And this act itself involves an exercise of private judgment. We are surprised that men of proper feeling and common sense should attempt to stilt themselves above their fellow men. We are surprised that Dr. Strachan should seek to stultify himself and others by proceeding on the presumption that God had specially appointed him; and his clergy, as the authoritative guides in the solemn questions which bear upon man's eternal interests. Can he or they "turn one hair white or black?" Can they produce any evidence of special endowments? If they can, we will yield to them. But if they can not, why do they persevere in making themselves absurd in the eyes of reasonable men, by their assertion of groundless and absurd claims?—We are willing to concede to the clergy of the Episcopal Church (many of whom we respect,) every thing we would concede to others, or demand for ourselves. But farther than this we will not go, cannot go, ought not to go. It grieves us to see a disposition to require more, for it discovers the existence and operation of a spirit of direct variance with one of the loveliest and most prominent Christian graces.

Twice, in the brief paragraph already cited, does Dr. Strachan inform his clergy that if the Bible were freely given to every man, and the right of private judgment admitted, there could be no such thing as heresy, error, or dissent. One would almost be tempted to think that he regarded the possible absence of these things as a calamity. We must sow the seed, reasons the husbandman, else we shall have no corn in the harvest. We must have "our Church" to direct and control private judgment," argues the bishop, else we shall have "no such thing as religious error, or heresy, or dissent." We scarcely believe that he means what he writes. We scarcely believe that he means to assert that it is by the guidance of his Church that heresy and error are produced. We believe it produces some error, but not all error, yet we do not think the bishop intends to admit this. What he means, we presume, is, that without some living, speaking authority, there would be no tribunal before which disputed doctrines could be brought, and errors detected and marked; which is just the papal argument. And this living, speaking authority which is to over-rule all men's decisions he claims for his Church—"our Church," as he styles it, speaking to his little knot of clergy. We cannot forbear smiling at the assumption.—This is just the claim which the Romanist makes for his Church, but he can present some larger show of reason. The principle on which this Protestant bishop seeks to stand, is precisely identical with that which the Roman Pontiff occupies. The latter maintains it with consistency, the former with singular inconsistency and awkwardness. By the Pope's rule, Dr. Strachan is a heretic and an errorist. By Dr. Strachan's rule, Dr. Chalmers would be placed in a similar category. By Dr. Chalmers' rule, Dr. Channing would be regarded after a like manner. And so the wretched delusion proceeds. There is no man who dogmatically condemns another, that is not dogmatically condemned himself. And in each case the authority which pronounces

the judgment is of equal weight, which is just none whatever. It were better, we think—more seemly, and more Christian-like—if men were to cease passing dogmatic judgments on each other. So thought the great apostle to the Gentiles some eighteen hundred years ago, when he wrote "who art thou that judgest another man's servant! to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand."—Bishop Strachan says, that the perfect freedom of individual judgment was not the doctrine of the Church of Christ in any age.—But St. Paul says, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." What does this mean? St. Paul says "hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." What does this mean? It is strange how zeal for a party can blind men's eyes to the obvious meaning of the sacred Scriptures.

The pretension of infallibility and the attempt to exercise authority over conscience—all this is essentially papistical. It belongs to the system of Romanism, and not to Protestantism. The latter sprung from freedom of mind, and is based upon it; the former rejects the idea of mental freedom at the outset, and peremptorily demands submission and obedience. To whatever extent any outward Church does violence to mental freedom, to that extent it is false to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. And when we look over the various Protestant sects, we are painfully reminded of their unfaithfulness to proper Protestant principles. That the Anglican Church is false to Protestant principles, Dr. Strachan's charge before us amply testifies. It gives a nominal acknowledgment of the right to enquire, but withholds the reality. The system of that Church deludes and mocks the enquirer. It "even encourages a sober and searching enquiry," says the bishop, but it "contends against rash interpretations, and a too ready adherence to our own fallible judgments." A "too ready adherence!" How he wishes to gild the pill for both clergy and people! Does he not know, and should he not say, that his Church contends against any adherence whatever, even the most deliberate, to individual judgment, if its opinion should come into conflict with certain humanly devised standards?—The plain truth of the matter is, and it ought to be expressed without circumlocution, that the Anglican Church will permit a perusal of the sacred Scriptures, but it compels the reader to gauge and square their contents into a conformity with the thirty-nine articles. In such a case the articles become the actual directory of faith, and the Bible is useful only so far as it can be found, or forced, to give support to the propositions contained in them. There can be no greater mockery than to call such a perusal of the Scriptures an enquiry after truth. An enquiry! Why the whole matter has been settled as to what the so-called enquirer must believe, before he commences to read at all. It is all cut and dry—it is all ready prepared in thirty-nine articles, and he knows that if his enquiry should terminate otherwise than in a conclusion already prescribed, he will be stigmatised as a heretic. Here is a mournful tampering with the dignity of truth, and with the sacred rights of the human mind. The Roman Catholic Church will permit private judgment on the same terms. You may read the Scriptures if you will, but you must not venture to call in question the settled standards of the church. These are "most certainly to be believed," no matter what the Scriptures disclose to your enquiring mind. With respect to private judgment, then, the two Churches stand on the same footing. But the Roman Church is consistent with its fundamental principles, while the Anglican is inconsistent.

But the Anglican, is not the only Church which is untrue to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. In its imposition of the Westminster Confession, the Church of Scotland evinces its want of fidelity to these principles. The Scottish Church hands the enquirer the Bible and the Westminster Confession: The latter contains a formal and precise statement of what must be believed. Now in such a case what is the use of reading the Scriptures, only to find proof for the preconceived settled creed? And what is this but degrading the sacred Scriptures, and making mockery of the enquiring mind?—Every authoritative creed is an insult to the individual mind, and an injury to the cause of truth. Every authoritative creed is a bar to free and candid enquiry. And where this

is arrested, error and superstition will as surely spring up, as weeds and thistles on the field of the sluggard. Other Churches, likewise, are in the habit of imposing authoritative creeds. But in every such case the essential principles of Protestantism are violated. The absolute supremacy of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the freedom of the human mind, both these principles are invaded.

There are, in truth, only two consistent positions to be occupied by theologians and religionists—the fixed Romanist ground, and the proper Protestant ground. The former is that of absolute authority. The latter that of perfect individual freedom. The bond of the one party would be identity of opinion. The bond of the other party, unity of spirit. Every attempt at compromise is inconsistent in itself, embarrassing in practice, and unsound in principle. With what consistency can those who reject the ancient and imposing authority of Rome, call upon other men to submit to their authority? If the Pope and the Council of Trent are fallible, so likewise is an English Convocation, or a Scottish Assembly. We must make up our minds to submit unconditionally, or we must resolve not to submit at all. If the former, then let us become Romanists, and be consistent. If the latter, then we become Protestants in the true and proper sense of the word, and assert our individual freedom, full and unlimited.

But there are consequences to be dreaded from such Protestant freedom. And they are prominently noticed by Dr. Strachan. The Bible given to men generally, with liberty to exercise their private judgment upon it, would lead them, he says, to "become Arians, Socinians, &c." And this is only saying, in other words, what the Bishop of St. Davids said some time since to his clergy. "The great source of the Unitarian heresy," said he, "is their favorite maxim that the interpretation of Scripture is to be governed by reason and not by authority." We thank you, Bishops, both of ye, for these words. We could ask no better testimony to the truthfulness of our views. Bishops, both trans-Atlantic and cis-Atlantic, plainly enough perceive that a rational interpretation of the sacred Scriptures—that is to say, an interpretation unshackled by the creeds and compilations of dark and semi-barbarous ages—would conduct to Unitarianism. Again we say, we could ask no better testimony to the truthfulness of our views, and their final prevalence. Men will not always patiently submit to be Church-bound and Creed-bound. Already have they risen numerous against ecclesiastical and priestly pretensions. And they are still rising—aye, rising by thousands. In every community are bands of Christian freemen to be found, who are loyal to their Lord and true to their mental convictions—men, who reject all human authority over conscience. They hold and "have their faith to themselves before God." In every country are to be found some "seven thousand men," true, faithful, free, and honest, who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of popular Churches and popular Creeds.

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