

reflection and better information may, in time, enable the wise but mistaken man to see his errors. Now comes the pinch. Shall he frankly own them, and strive to correct them: or, because he has committed himself to the wrong side, shall he still adhere to it? Alas! what a deal of falsehood, meanness, and all sorts of iniquity does that phrase,—*committed to his party, or to certain opinions*, cover. It is right for a man to adhere staunchly to his party and to his opinions, but he must do this no farther than truth warrants. Properly speaking, a man should be committed to nothing but to truth; to adhere consistently to this is wisdom and goodness: but to adhere to error, because once embraced, is folly and wickedness. Who can, indeed, measure the wickedness of the man who persists in error: that he sees or even suspects, and still leads multitudes on in a wrong course, rather than frankly own that at first he misled them through misapprehensions. It may not be easy for such a man to get others to retrace their steps, but the *more difficult part* is, first of all to turn back himself:—in a word frankly to own that he has been in error.

(To be concluded in our next.)

#### REVIEW.

(For the Presbyterian.)

*Apocalyptic Regeneration; A series of Lectures on the Book of Revelation; with a Dissertation on the origin and nature of Symbolic Language, and on the use of Hieroglyphs by the Prophets; by the Rev. ROBERT POLLOK, Minister of Kings-ton Church, Glasgow.*

Sober-minded persons, who wish to read for edification, feel no little uneasiness in our times in taking up a new work on the Book of Revelation. Perhaps on no portion of the Sacred Volume has more been written within the present century than on this book. It were to show great ignorance, or at least to manifest very narrow views, did we affirm that there has been no portion of this kind of writing which has been subservient in advancing true piety in the Church, and in giving more enlarged and just views of prophecy. Yet we cannot but think that most readers capable of forming a judgement will be ready to admit that many of the writers on prophecy, and especially on Apocalyptic prophecy, have done not a little "to darken counsel with words without knowledge". If it requires no ordinary share of attainments to write a sound and useful exposition of any portion of Scripture, it assuredly requires varied and high talents to give a safe exposition of the Apocalypse. He who sets himself to the task of expounding the prophetic parts of this book, with any hope of success, must be a man of ripe scholarship, extensive information, sound piety, a clear judgement and vigorous common sense. It is hardly needful to say that not a few of the class of writers to whom we refer have been lamentably deficient in more than one of these qualities. Hence the failure of certain of these expositors is very easily accounted for. Others again have utterly failed in producing satisfactory exposition, from the obvious fact that they rather went to the Book of Revelation to search for proofs to support some preconceived hypothesis than to find by a legitimate analysis what

truths the book really contains. A man is not the worse for a few harmless *crotchets*, nor do we dislike even a touch of romance in the character of an intellectual man;—yet assuredly, if he has either crotchets or romance in excess, he is not the man to write an exposition on the Apocalypse. It will not be questioned, however, that many have written on the prophetic parts of this Book, apparently from the mere desire to establish some hypothesis as to the time the Millennium shall commence, the downfall of the Pope, or the overthrow of some European dynasty. It is needless to say that many of these theories, which were loudly enough cried up in their day, are only remembered now for their extravagance and other futility; and no doubt like follies, which are yet perpetrated in our day, will meet with similar refutation, and will be justly treated by the next generation with the same contempt with which the present treats the bold conclusions to which writers of a former age had come.

It is not denied that there may be such a legitimate exposition given of *unfulfilled prophecy* as may indicate the times and circumstances of its probable accomplishment. But on this the wisest will not be the most ready to speak with unqualified assurance, nor will they ever be found labouring to press into their service unfulfilled prophecy to support some fanciful hypothesis. This has indeed been the crying sin of not a few imaginative and reckless expositors, not only on the Revelation, but also on other books of Scripture.

But, even should we admit that the favorite theory is free from all extravagance and logically wrought out to a fair conclusion, yet, if the reasonings and illustrations did not tend at every step to unfold to the understanding clearer views of the scheme of Redemption, and to awaken in the heart a more ardent love for the Saviour, and a stronger faith in His atonement, still we would say that on the whole the exposition could do little for the glory of God or the good of souls. One cannot but say it, more in sorrow than in anger, that many books on prophecy appear more like books to explain riddles than to advance a sober and practical piety in the Church.

It may or may not be well "to know the times and the seasons," but to make every exposition of God's Word directly subservient to prepare men to meet God as their judge, and fit them through an increase of grace for being eternally happy in Heaven, is a thing that must ever be well. We would say to certain writers on prophecy, Make it a question, if you will, and solve it if you can, when Popery is to come down, or the Millennium begin; but we beseech you never to forget that the first question with every child of Adam is, "What must I do to be saved." Nor do we think it superfluous to remind certain writers, and the same is

applicable to certain preachers, that to minister to the prurient curiosity of men as to future events in the Church and the world may have no little influence in turning their minds away from the great inquiry as to their own salvation. Curiosity is a most valuable quality of mind, and, when properly regulated, never fails to yield beneficial fruits, but he who gives scope to a vagrant curiosity, or labours to nourish this in others, should eschew the task of expounding the Book of Revelation. If the most sublime and obscure portions of God's Word afford the widest scope for the merely curious enquirer, it is nevertheless true that these are the very departments in which he is likely to perpetrate the greatest mischief. The truth is, that a prurient curiosity in sacred things is no indication of either high intellect or superior grace, but is rather evidence of a frivolous mind and a vitiated spiritual taste. Nor is it uncharitable to suppose that there have been writers who have pandered to this vicious taste in readers, merely to gain that worst species of fame, a temporary notoriety. But, while truth compels us thus to speak of some, justice forbids that the same charge should be brought against all. Not a few of the writers on Apocalyptic prophecy have done good service to the Church, for they have not only communicated valuable information but by the tone of their productions have contributed to the growth of a healthy and practical piety. It were not easy, however, to name any writer in the English language who is more fully entitled to this commendation than the Author of the work placed at the head of this article. Mr. Pollok, who is one of the ministers of Glasgow, is, we believe, well known and highly esteemed in the Church to which he belongs, and we cannot but think that the productions of his pen will, ere long, make his name to be favourably known far beyond the confines of his native land.

We regret that our limits forbid us entering as fully into the character of the present work as its merits deserve. As far as we know, the work is not yet completed. Indeed we have only had an opportunity of examining the first volume. Hence we are unable to say what the author's peculiar views may be on certain of the Apocalyptic prophecies. But, if the first portion of the work be a fair specimen of what is to follow, there is no danger in auguring well of the whole. It has already been hinted that certain qualities are indispensable to fit any man for being a useful expositor of the Revelation. Mr. Pollok obviously possesses these in no ordinary degree. Every one must be struck with what is apparent even in the first volume—his extensive information, general and solid scholarship, clearness of reasoning and vigorous common sense. Yet it were to do injustice alike to our own views and the character