

made. And yet, woman is always to "bring forth children in sorrow." If, then, an accoucheur, who maintained the literal of this "sorrow," were to attend one of those patients who "from their more natural mode of life," and "the greater purity of the atmosphere and food" to which they are accustomed, suffered little or no inconvenience from labour, as is almost generally "the case with the Indian women of South America,"\* the Squaws of Canada, and many black tribes, that accoucheur would be bound, if desirous of duly carrying out the strict letter of the law, to use such means that the labour should indeed be one of "sorrow." A black, no more than a white woman, has a right to be exempt from a curse universally and immutably entailed on the sex. Again, "He (Eve's husband,) shall rule over her." No doubt weak-minded husbands may find it convenient to quote this text in its most literal acceptance, to their wives, as some apology for their tyranny; but few duly impressed with the dignity of the sex would venture hereby to assume undue authority. Nor will woman be deterred hereby from vindicating her just rights;† but this cannot be the case with those who clamour for the literal letter of the law. We may not, however, pursue this subject farther. Be the instances already adduced, sufficient to show what inconsistency and impropriety there is in the opinion that the word "sorrow" of the denunciation against the woman is literally to be accomplished on the sex in the present day, and that to prevent in any way this accomplishment, is both unscriptural and irreligious.

Professor Simpson has added many logical and convincing arguments in refutation of the actual and imaginary objections of the literalists. One or two we have adduced as our own, because they occurred to us before we had seen the learned Professor's book; and because we thought the cause of truth would not suffer by repeating them. For others, which appear to us most cogent, we must refer the reader to the work itself; and yet, we cannot refrain transcribing one which appears to us particularly happy. Professor Simpson says, "But the accoucheurs and surgeons among you, who object to the use of chloroform, on the ground that it goes, in their opinion, against the object and end of the primeval course upon woman, strangely forget that the whole science and whole art and practice of midwifery is, in its essence and object, one continuous effort to mitigate and remove the effects of that curse." And after enumerating these means of mitigation the Professor continues—"By these means they succeeded partially, in times past, in mitigating the sufferings and effects of parturition, and thought they committed no sin. But a means is discovered by which the sufferings of the mother may be relieved far more effectually; and then they immediately denounce this higher amount of relief as a high sin. Gaining your

end, according to their religious views, imperfectly, was no sin—gaining your end more fully and perfectly is, they argue, an undiluted and unmitigated peice of iniquity."\* We must beg leave further to quote what a Christian clergyman, who takes the same view of the case as Professor Simpson, and the humble writer of the present inquiry, has said in connection with this subject, "I should not be surprised, in the course of the debates upon the emancipation of the Jews, to find some members pleading, as some have pleaded in former times, that to give a Jew a legitimation in any commonwealth, is a plain contravention of the will and word of God concerning that people."† The writer was not incorrect in his prophetic anticipations. In the late discussion on the Jewish Bill in the British Parliament, there were not wanting those who *did urge* such an objection, and it was, doubtless, as much in consequence of their everlastingly chiming this objection, as from any other cause, that the Bill was lost.

With these extracts from Professor Simpson we conclude, but not before earnestly exhorting our readers to weigh calmly and unprejudicedly the arguments adduced on both sides the question, before they decide the employment of anæsthetics in cases of labour to be unscriptural and irreligious. As to the propriety or expediency of their use, in a medical point of view, as before remarked, it is not for us but for others to decide. We desire only to show that if a certain case should call for their employment, both physician and patient would not be acting unscripturally were they to use them. It is true, that some teachers of religion have not been able to see the innocency of the practice, and one has pronounced chloroform, in particular, to be "a decoy of Satan, apparently offering itself to bless woman; but in the end, it will harden society, and rob God of the deep, earnest cries which arise in time of trouble for help."‡ But we have already seen that language similar in tone has been employed by such injudicious and bigotted zealots (worse enemies to the Scriptures than unbelievers themselves,) when waging a fierce war against the introduction of inoculation. And we cannot but remember how, among Christians, the teachings of the celebrated Galileo were also styled unscriptural, and himself branded with such titles as "liar," "impostor," etc.; and how among Jews, that eminent philosopher, Moses Maimonides, whose gigantic intellect has been extolled as well by enemy as by friend, was excommunicated by the French Israelites, and copies of his works, now so much prized, publicly burned by them, because he strove to disabuse them of various absurdities they had permitted to usurp the place of religion. Nor can we forget that the most important discoveries in medical science, when first broached, have had to contend with this same prejudice and bigotry§—that Harvey called down upon himself the indignation and ridicule of the profession, because he taught the circulation of the blood—that his followers

\* Dr. Elliotson's Human Physiology: page 819.

† The remark has been made in a deprecatory strain, by one well known for his accomplishments as a Hebrew scholar and critic, that although God said, "And he shall rule, [Yimshol] (the Kal or active form,) over thee," the text is now read by some as if it were, "And he [Yimashel] (the Niphal or passive form,) shall be ruled by thee."

\* Anæsthesia, p. 125.

† Anæsthesia, p. 127.

‡ Anæsthesia: p. 121.

§ See a pamphlet by Dr. Elliotson on "Surgical Operations without pain in the Mesmeric State."