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## Contributors & Correspondents.

### NATURAL AS COMPARED WITH SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

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Mind is undoubtedly one of the most wonderful things among the many mysteries of our nature. Scarcely less wonderful is the power of speech, by which we communicate the hidden operations of the mind. Dangoango entirely fails to represent the different shades of thought and feeling of which the mind is susceptible. Therefore in all languages the same word is used to represent many forms of thought. The Heathen are said "to know God," and in other passages "not to know God." Knowledge is at one time depreciated as worthless as vanity, and as a weariness of the flesh, while at the other time, it is said to be "life eternal." In such statements there is no real contradiction whatever. The Scriptures speak of two kinds of knowledge; Intellectual or speculative knowledge on the one hand, and spiritual or experimental on the other. These differ in the objects, and in their effects. Speculative Knowledge, is called in Scripture *Natural Knowledge*, because possessed by the natural man, and discoverable by the light of nature. A knowledge of science and art of the productions and phenomena of the natural world; a knowledge of mankind whether drawn from personal observation or the records of history; a knowledge of the philosophy of mind and morals, considered simply as matters of speculative enquiry:—these are included in Natural Knowledge. Spiritual or experimental knowledge on the other hand, is distinguished by the nature of its objects and the state of the recipient's mind. It is due in great measure to the influences of a divine power operating upon the mind, enlarging the faculty of perception and revealing important truths not otherwise understood by the natural heart.

Natural Knowledge is insufficient to lead man to a discovery of those truths which are necessary to salvation. "The world says the Apostle knew not God," neither as the independent eternal and unchangeable Jehovah revealed in Scripture, nor as the Redeemer of man. For ages the world was left to solve the problem, as to what man could do untaught of God, and signally failed in the attempt. Egypt, Greece and Rome—nay the entire world, with the exception of Palestine, was covered with the grossest darkness and groaned under false religious and false conceptions of the Deity. "Ye men of Athens said Paul, when speaking on Mars Hill, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions. I found an altar with the inscription. To the unknown God." And what was true of Athens, is true to-day of the Heathen world, where the light of nature, but reveals the moral and spiritual darkness which prevail.

Natural Knowledge is insufficient to make men holy. No amount of it can make a man good. The mere knowledge of supernatural truths cannot predispose to a holy life. Men talk about looking up from nature to nature's God, as if nature in itself were sufficient to solemnize and sanctify the soul. To the Christian, it is true, all nature speak of God, but to the infidel Nature's Voice are unintelligible. It is not by mere intellectual culture that the world is to be converted and society reformed, but by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, brought by the Holy Spirit into contact with the soul of man. Need we quote the testimony of individuals, famous on the page of history, as to the worthlessness of human learning. Take the case of Solomon himself—Artist, Poet, Naturalist, Zoologist, Moralist, Politician and King all combined in one; with an eloquence and a wisdom, that dazzled the Oriental world, and yet what is his language:—"In much wisdom there is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Of making many books, there is no end and much study is a weariness of the flesh." Take the case of Byron possessed of fine sympathies and susceptibilities. Majestic in intellect with a genius almost superhuman, and yet a character immoral cruel and repulsive in the last degree, trampling down the rights of social life,—a lover yet scerner of his race. "What were his own words at the close of his brief career.

"My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers, the fruit of love are gone:  
The worm, the canker and the grief are mine alone."

Listen to what Sir Humphrey Davy says, himself Orator, Poet, Philosopher, world wide renowned by his discoveries; a favoured son of science, flattered by the world and honoured by the great: Yet what were his feelings amid these very plaudits!

"Valde Miserabilis! Valde Miserabilis! Very miserable, very miserable." Hear is last confession in his fatal illness.—I envy no quality of mind, or intellect in others nor genius, power or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful to me,—I believe most useful, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing. This makes up a disciple of goodness—creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over decay and destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights, and brings up the most delightful of all visions, when the sensualists and the skeptics have only gloom and decay and annihilation!

Natural knowledge of itself is evil in its effects. It tends to guide and self conceit. It puffeth up. It makes a man to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, so that wise in his own eyes that he becomes of fool. Conceited ignorance is offence in the eyes of men, how much more in the sight of God! Intellectual pride produces self confidence, and almost invariably tends to Skepticism, which results in open fidelity. Bacon well remarks that "a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism, but depth in philosophy, bringeth men's minds about to religion."

But apart altogether from the utter worldliness of human knowledge to make men wise unto salvation, mere intellectual studies are wearisome and unsatisfying. Much study is a weariness of the flesh. Extraordinary attainments in any one branch of science or literature cannot be attained, but by untiring diligence,—constant and intense application and prolonged self-denial. Manual labour is not, as many hastily conclude, the severest form of human toil. The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, after the work and exhaustion of the day, but the study and research of the man of letters is too often followed by sleepless nights and a wasted constitution. He who would gain eminence among his fellow-men must not only deny himself many innocent enjoyments, but lay his account to the endurance of positive sufferings, from which the mass of men are excepted. Many are the disappointments, too, which accompany such a life. Success is not always gained, even when the faculties are strained to their utmost tension. Often the plodding, persevering student is mortified to find all his hopes frustrated, his plans thwarted, and the much-coveted prize snatched from his grasp by some far less deserving rival. Long tried experiments issue in absolute failure; favourite theories are exploded and overturned, and results are secured altogether inconsiderable compared with the vast amount of labour expended. And even when success rewards the diligence of the student, the knowledge acquired is far from satisfying. The more we know of our own character, and of the world in which we live, the greater oftentimes is our sorrow. We cannot extend our researches to any great extent without meeting with sad evidences of the effects of sin, the inhumanity of man to man, and the fearful ruin of our race. Blood and carnage, cries of distress and despair, tyranny, injustice and oppression cover many a page in the history of humanity. And finally, after all our efforts, how little can the longest life accomplish in the different departments of science and literature! The more we know but reveals the little we actually do know; the further we penetrate the secrets of nature, but reveals mysteries beyond our ken, paths we cannot tread, questions we cannot answer, depths we cannot fathom. We know but in part, and that part is very limited. After all our boasting as to the powers of the human intellect, and the achievements of the human mind, we have to confess, that like children in the alphabet of their education, we are but entering upon the elements of all true knowledge. Were it not for the thought that a deeper, clearer, more satisfactory insight into the works of God is before us in another sphere, we would stop short at the very threshold of our investigations. Enjoyment there is undoubtedly in studying the works of nature, but apart from the knowledge of the true God, it is unsatisfactory and transitory.

Spiritual or experimental knowledge differs from natural knowledge, as to its objects. These are above nature, unattainable by the natural man, and have not their origin in any human source. Says Paul: "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect—not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that came to nought, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, for God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."

Spiritual knowledge includes intellectual cognition and appreciation of things revealed. The Scriptures do not depreciate knowledge of a speculative kind. They only

teach their insufficiency to sanctify and save. Intellectual knowledge is absolutely necessary. God does not enlighten men's minds in secular truths by means of miracles, nor does he spiritually illuminate a mind where there is no knowledge. Intellectual knowledge is necessary for the Holy Spirit to operate upon. The glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, for anything we know, may be in proportion to their knowledge upon earth. Mind and soul should therefore be used together in our search after truth.

Spiritual knowledge is spiritually discerned. The things discerned are spiritual qualities of the truth. The same truths appear different to different minds. The natural man takes account only of the intellectual phases of the truth. The Christian sees from a different stand point—looks with a different eye, and sees the truth in a different light. A man unskilled in painting may look upon a beautiful picture, and yet not perceive the blending of the different colors, and the proportions of light and shade, that render it so perfect and so pleasing. The very things which in the estimation of the artist are the glory of the painting, may have no interest in his eyes. So it is in regard to divine truth. Spiritual discernment is due to the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is not an objective operation, like the shining of the sun upon the object looked at but is inward and subjective. The Spirit "ours celestial light" upon the eye balls,—he moves in a mysterious way in the deep recesses of our nature and on the constitutional element of the soul, rendering Vision clear, and making objects plain, which formerly were dim and indistinct. Thus the most mysterious of Bible truths, became simple and sure to the believing soul.

Spiritual knowledge is blessed in its effects. It sanctifies. A Spiritual apprehension of divine things produces right affections towards God. We become like God. By beholding him we are changed from glory to glory. And this knowledge of divine truth here, is followed by the beautiful Vision hereafter. Beautiful Vision is just beautiful knowledge. The knowledge of God is life eternal, and heaven is the beautiful Vision of God in Christ.

The consideration of this subject suggests the following lessons: All the knowledge desirable from nature concerning God can do us little good. Essential and necessary in many points of view, it is in itself insufficient. We need the illumination of God's spirit to perceive even the beauties of the present world, far more the glories of the next. Our minds should be exercised in the different departments of science, and art, but unless we approve such studies in a humble, child-like spirit and with a desire to glorify the Creator, so clearly seen in his handiwork, our labors are worse than vain.

Spiritual knowledge is not incompatible with material or speculative knowledge. It is very true and sadly to be lamented, that many of the greatest minds in ancient and modern times have known nothing of God's gracious dealings with their souls. Able to compute the distances of the stars—to read the history of our race in the records of geology, and dazzle the world, with their learning and their eloquence, they have remained painfully ignorant of the way of salvation, through a living Redeemer. But on the other hand there are many instances, of sincere and devoted piety, united with marvellous intellectual power;—where simple faith in the blood of Jesus, has shed a lustre round the achievements of the scholar, and afforded sweetest satisfaction in the hour of death. For when called to grapple with the King of Terrors, neither our learning nor our scholarships can avail us. The applause and hosannas of the multitude may be sweet in the day of health, but 'tis but an empty hollow sound, in the ear of the dying man!

Spiritual knowledge is thus the noblest of all. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding. Such knowledge is better than choice gold—more to be desired than rubies—all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. It brings with it on remembrance—no weariness—no disappointment. Its ways are ways of peace; while at the close of life, it introduces to a world of sinless perfection and unclouded vision. Blessed are they, who in their first efforts after knowledge, commit their hearts to the guidance of the holy spirit.

## PRESBYTERIAN WRONGS.

Number 3.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—In my last letter, I tried to show that the Building which bears the name of Knox College, Toronto, is well fitted to ruin the health, the tastes, the

morals, the intellects and the souls of the poor Students who are compelled to spend six years within its walls. I hope now to show, that the whole course of training which is there undergone, is quite unequal to the wants of the age in which we live.

It would however be in vain to propose remedies for what very few feel to be an evil; the public, generally, require first to be told just exactly how matters stand at present. Go out through the country, and you will scarcely find a person who knows anything about the way in which things are managed at the College. It is hard to say who is to blame, when everybody would seem to come in for a share. One thing however is certain. The College authorities will find themselves engaged in a rather tedious struggle with the church, grinding out, as they have been accustomed to do, a maintenance for the College, if they do not pursue a new plan and inform the church as to what they are doing. I have long hoped they would take it into their heads to publish some kind of "Catalogue" or "Report" of some kind or another, so that we might find out what they are doing or propose to do. But I have hoped in vain.

They may perhaps be astonished somewhat, by the assertion that the majority of church members do not know the names of the Professors. But that is true. I constantly meet with persons who think that Prof. Young is on the staff. Whether there are two Professors or eight is a question, in regard to which the great mass of Presbyterians are entirely in the dark.

I should say here, that when I speak of the College authorities, I am making an attack upon no one in particular. I have never yet been able to find out who the authorities are; and I do not know any other plebeian who has. I have managed to find out, that there is a College Board and a College Senate. But what they do no one knows; and whether they do any thing at all or not, I have never heard.

Now I have tried to gather together some information about the constitution of the College. There is scarcely anything about it, so far as I can see, which does not call for reform. But, before we talk of reform, we must know what is to be reformed. I will therefore venture a piece of information, for the public, on the present arrangements of the College.

The College course is divided into two parts; the Literary and the Theological. The Theological course lasts over a period of three years,—the usual time allotted to the study of Theology in all Colleges. In this course the usual Subjects for study are proscribed. Apologetics, Exegetics, Systematic Theology, Church History, Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, I understand, are all taught. But there is not nearly enough of any one of them required. It seems that the Professors go on the principle that their students can learn nothing that is not given to them in lectures; and the examinations are confined to the Lectures. Now, I am informed that, during the first three months of this present session, the Senior Exegetical Class read through three Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. No person who ever heard Prof. Cavan lecture will find fault with him. In my opinion, he could not be replaced by a better man, if you searched the world over. His careful, exact style of proceeding is just what young ministers need. But, surely a student can read more than a Chapter in a month. It seems to me that not less than one of the Gospels and one Epistle should be required of the classes every session. Teach them to read for themselves.

Then, in Systematic Theology, only one text-book is proscribed; and only as much of that exam used upon as has been taken up in the Lectures. It seems to me that Students should be required to master the representative writers of all the great opposing systems of Theology. Turretine, and Dick and Hodge and Watson and Maurice should all be on the programme, unless it is intended in the College, to furnish the Church with an ignorant ministry. Besides, it has always been the custom to teach Theology, as connected with the phases of thought peculiar to the sixteenth century. Modern thought is left to be mastered after the student has plunged into the great work of his life. He ought to know what style of thought he is to meet with, before he encounters it.

So, I might go on through the course and find the same want of completeness almost everywhere. The Literary course raises a question which will take a letter for itself.

There has never been a through-going spirit of work in Knox College. It will never be produced, until there is a printed Curriculum setting forth, on the face of it,

a large quantity of solid work, and more than hating at the possibility of the King at the examinations. As compared with the Curriculum of the University of Toronto, a very fair allowance of time for the sessional work of Knox College would be one month.

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## ROMANISTS AND PROTESTANT CRITICS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Will you pardon the presumption of one of whom you know little or nothing, if he should ask you the favor of a small space in some corner of your paper for a remark or two in reference to some matters which have recently passed under his observation, and regarding which he would ask a question or two?

I presume from the little I know of you by your paper, that you are a Protestant, the son of a Protestant of the strictest sect, and therefore, that you understand better than your humble servant, the sentiments of your Protestant correspondent towards us poor papists.

I believe you and those who contribute pabulum to your readers, look upon us as being little or nothing better than poor, blind, deluded votaries of the man of sin. Now, granting for the present, that we really are such, and that you and your conferees are the children of the light and of the day. May I ask, what is your duty towards us. Is it to call us by all the nice names you can invent, and rake up all the ashes of past centuries, and unearth all fossils of deeds of wickedness, which as you say have been committed by us and our church, and to blaze such, together with all the horrors of real, imaginary or invented

deeds abroad, from pulpits and platforms, and by newspapers and pamphlets? Do you really imagine, sir, that such orations as that delivered lately in Montreal, by a Dr Burns, and in Toronto, by Rev. Mr King, and by hundreds of other—of the baser sect, about the horrors of inquisitions, St. Bartholomews, Smithfields, &c., are going to persuade us of our ignorance of the truth, the wicked character of our own church; or to begot in us a love to you or your religion? If so, you were never more egregiously mistaken in your life.

When or where have you ever heard of a Catholic having been converted to your church by such means? But, perhaps, I should not be giving these hints, as I know that such conduct upon your part is the most effectual means of keeping us Catholics more closely connected with our own church, and defending us against all the efforts to lead us away from her.

You boast most pompously of having the Bible, and therein the way to eternal life, in the work and example of Jesus Christ and His Apostles and Evangelists. Did you ever read in that book that Christ, or any of His disciples were guilty of such conduct toward the Gentile nations around them? Did they scour up all the past history of any of the heathen churches around them to find out deeds of violence, and horrid cruelty committed by their ancestors or those who thought about religious matters as they did, centuries before, and did they continually hold up those dark pictures of their own invention constantly before their eyes in the most detestable manner with a view to aggravate them to the utmost, in order to convert them to their faith?

But you say, they did sometimes call them the children of their father, the devil, the seed of evil doers, a generation of vipers, &c. Did they? Where do you find that? No, never. Such epithets were applied to some who professed to be Bible readers but lived and acted, like some of your great orators, in anything but the spirit of the Bible, who like many professors of religion in the present day were Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites.

I hope you will cease, if we are blind, as you say, throwing more dust in our eyes. If you are going to preach to us, preach to us Jesus and the resurrection, and the hope of eternal life in and by Him,—and let us hear less of Knox, and Calvin and St. Bartholomew and the Inquisition. Our souls will be none the better prepared for death and judgement, for all you can tell us about those things, nor yet for all you can tell us about the iniquitous corruptions of our poor priests and nuns, for really we know as much of these as you do, and we are only made angry by your descriptions of such things and believe none of it. Nay, we don't think that you believe it yourselves, but that your only object is, to hurt and annoy us. We do think that a great deal of what you write and say about such things is the fruit of great ignorance and rank prejudice. Do stop then if you care anything about our souls. If you think as you profess to do, that we are perishing for lack of knowledge, and that you love our souls, give us the knowledge which will save us, and not that sort of knowledge which only deepens our hatred of yourselves and your religion. Let our ignorance exist rather your compassion than such indications of hatred to us, which only tends to keep us worse than we are, if, as you say, we are already bad.

But you object,—"you often abuse us," Granted that we do sometimes give a bitter morsel, we don't profess to receive all our ideas of matters of that kind from the Bible, as you profess to do. We have a somewhat wider resource to draw from, but you have only the Bible, and the Bible alone, which forbids the spirit of retaliation, so you must desist if you act towards us in the spirit of that book, from such conduct as above referred to.

Remain yours,

A POOR PAPIST.