

# The Wesleyan.

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"WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING: THEREFORE GET WISDOM."

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## Theology.

A CHRISTIAN.

In the first ages of the church, the name of Christian was identical with all that could elevate and ennoble. It signified no faint convictions, no questionable motives, no equivocal condition. The zeal it spoke of was an inextinguishable flame; the hope it argued an anchor immovable before the rudest tempest. The joys of which it was the symbol were as life amidst the dead, the charity it signified, warm as maternal tenderness, and gentle as the dews of heaven. No danger could alarm, no opposition quell, that spirit of active beneficence it was known to indicate. The tury of the persecutor and the derision of the scorner were alike powerless before it. He who possessed it stood, composed and dauntless, against the combined assaults of calumny and outrage; and of earth and hell. As if a shield of adamant were stretched above his head,—as if a buckler of triple brass begirt his bosom,—he was insensible to weakness, and incapable of fear. He might fall, but he could not fly. He might perish; but he could not yield. His blood might be spilt upon the ground, but his hope could not waver, nor his honour be trampled in the dust. You might crush his limbs with torture,—his affections with solitude,—his name with intamy,—and his freedom with the dungeon and the chain;—but he bore within him an imperishable principle, which you could not crush or impair; it was the energy and power of faith. And this, like electric fire, acquired force by resistance, and intensity by repression; and borrowed increase of splendour from surrounding gloom. The sun might have been staid in his career, and the stars failed from their course, the moon might have forgotten her brightness, and the tides of ocean their return, the fragrant of spring might have departed, and the fruitfulness of summer sickened, and the blast of wintry desolation swept and deformed the year; all earthly light might have faded, and all joy and beauty withered and passed away;—but this living flame could never languish; this ethereal spirit never could expire. Here was the fragment of a new creation,—the germinant rudiment of a yet unfashioned world,—telling in itself the embryo of that last form of perfected existence, in which the great parent mind would finally enshrine the revelations of his power and glory. It possessed a depth of essence, and a plenitude of being, fitted to survive convulsion, and to forbid decay. It could only waste with the waste of that eternal spring from whence it was derived; and hence subsisted in perennial fulness, and poured its renewing influences with an unending stream.

Christianity was then the religion of heroes,—of saints, apostles, and martyrs. It belonged to them "of whom the world was not worthy." It transformed all it touched into its own celestial likeness, enduing its subjects, of whatever age or condition, with an inflexible constancy, and an exhaustless ardour, before which the virtues of the patriot or the warrior were beheld with diminished lustre, and dwindled into ordinary things. To be a Christian then, was to hold fellowship with uncreated wisdom; to drink of the fountain of primeval purity; and to breathe the soul of philanthropy as unquenchable as it was unrestrained. It was to tread in the footsteps of Jesus: and to partake the mind of God. The pity, with which a Christian then was animated, was the same that wept in Gethsemane, and bled in Golgotha. The sanctity with which he was arrayed was, in essence, that of Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The fervour which impelled him, had once looked on dissolution in its most hideous form, and said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till

it be accomplished." The energy which bore him onward was no other than that which made death vital, and mortal agony the source of endless exultation, as it lighted the features and gazed from the eye, which were now dimmed, and shrouded, and closing, on the cross.

Such was a Christian then,—and has that solemn designation declined in any measure from the import which it once included? Has it come to signify a less exalted character, either of sentiment or obligation? Does it mean less than that we who have assumed it have "tasted of the heavenly gift,—and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and felt the powers of the world to come"—that we are "not in darkness, neither of the night, but have become children of light and of the day"—"from the empire of Satan we have passed into the kingdom of the Son of God?" Do we call ourselves, by its assumption, anything less illustrious than a "royal priesthood, and a peculiar people,"—"followers of God as his dear children,"—"followers with the saints, and members of his household"? What mean we by it, except that we are "not our own but bought with a price, that we should glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits which are God's?" Has it now become less energetically true than, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his"—or can we justify its application to a meaner standard than that of having "the same mind in us which was in him?"

Behold, then, my brethren, the model to which you are pledged to be conformed,—the type you are to bear,—the inscription which is to be written on your forehead,—the purity which is to cleanse your very garments,—and the light which is to beam around your path. You are Christians! Forge not either the grandeur or the peril of that most sacred name. The recollection of its greatness may quicken you to action, and the scrutiny which it invites may teach you circumspection, mingled with diligence and lowliness. Think, then, respecting it—and learn to make such thoughts habitual—as your joy—your heritage—your triumph,—that so it may never become the seal of your perdition,—and the brand of your eternal dishonour,—to be a signet of reprobation and the curse,—and having been the badge of your unfaithfulness on earth, to become, in hell, the climax of your infamy, and the consummation of your woe.—*Rev. R. S. McAll, L. L. D.*

### USE OF REASON IN RELIGION.

The use of reason in religion and philosophy, is the same. As without facts, we can gain no knowledge of nature, so without inspired truths, which are God's statement of facts either future or invisible, we can make no discoveries in religion. The use of reason, therefore, is to enable us to become intelligent listeners to the divine voice, and to open out to us the scope and purport of the inspired oracles. When we understand whatever has been affirmed by the prophets and the apostles, we have reached the ultimate limit of religious knowledge. This, and not the addition of our own speculations, is the end of all rational inquiry with respect to revelation. Had we any doubts respecting the feebleness of human faculties, and the utter inability to discover divine truth, when not enlightened from on high, we need only look to the greatest minds that have ever existed, groping about in the darkness of antiquity, and falling from one depth of absurdity into another. Our great object is not to bend the discoveries of revelation, so as to meet our own opinions, but to cast away all our prejudices, and approaching divine truth with unoccupied minds, to make the thoughts of the inspired writers our own. We must place ourselves in the point of view from which the Bible contains

plates surrounding objects, that we may see all things in the clear light of revelation. We must feel as well as think with the inspired writers, and, entering into their sentiments and reasonings, be carried along with the main stream of their argument, till we arrive at all their conclusions, and find their thoughts possessing our minds, and their very words rising to our lips. Thus we shall be cast into the mould of divine revelation, and take the stamp of its godlike and immortal image, and as, at the revival of letters, it was the ambition of the Cicero-mans to write upon all occasions like Cicero, clothing whatever they had to advance with his turn of thought and mode of expression, so in taking the Bible to be our guide to sacred truth, we may enter with equal clearness into the divine thoughts, and make it the standard of our judgment, and being, even with things remotely connected with revelation, bearing a close resemblance to our hearts, like a strain of music, which blends with the imagination long after the instrument is silent.

The use of reason in religion is to enlarge our minds to the amplitude of truth, but the abuse of reason is more common, which would contract truth to the narrowness of our understanding. Men, upon all other subjects save religion, confess their natural ignorance, they come to the first elements of doctrine as learners, and not as judges; if they find out any thing unprofitable, or are startled at any conclusion, they attribute the difficulty not to the master, but to the scholar, and never deny any proposition on the mere ground of their not comprehending it. But far different is the case with those who are called rational divines, though confessedly ignorant of the nature of every atom that surrounds them, they can pronounce, *a priori*, with the utmost confidence concerning the mode of the divine existence. They dogmatize with as much boldness regarding what is possible, and what is impossible, to be believed concerning God as if they carried a model of the Deity within them.—*J. Douglas, Esq.*

## Biblical Literature.

OF THE KINDS OF WORDS AND THEIR VARIOUS USES.

**I. Design of the following chapter.** The former chapter treated of the connexion between words and ideas, and deduced from that connexion, several fundamental principles for the interpretation of language. The present chapter is appropriated to the consideration of words as used in a literal or tropical, emphatic or unemphatic sense. It also treats of words as employed in abstract, and of abstract words as employed for concrete ones.

All these things belong to the nature of language as employed to communicate our ideas; and therefore are properly classed, by Ernesti, among the principles of language, on which the science of Herienseus is built. Morus has thrown this chapter into his preceptive part, and thus contravened a principle with respect to the rules which grow out of the principles here developed are exhibited in Part v. Chapters v. and vi.

**2. Importance of the following considerations.** It is of great importance, in respect to finding the sense of words, to be acquainted with those distinctions which affect the sense, and alter or augment the meaning.

**3. Words proper and tropical.** The first important division or distinction of words, in respect to their meaning, is into proper and tropical, i. e., literal and figurative, or (better still) primary and secondary. (Compare Morus, p. 280. ff.)

A proper word is a definite name given to a certain thing; and as such, may be explained by adverting to the proper names of persons. A tropical word is one used out

of its proper, i. e., original sense; e. g. *rosy face, snowy skin*, where *rosy* and *snowy* cannot be literally or properly predicated of the skin. The names *tropes* and *tropical* come from the Greek word *τροπος*, *τροπος*, *τροπος*.

*Tropos* also (1.) From *similitudo*, real or supposed. E. g. the *vine creeps*. This is called metaphor. (2.) From *conjunction*, which is either physical or intellectual, i. e., supposed, believed. Physical or real, where a part of a house is put to signify the whole, or the container for the thing contained, as to offer the cup, i. e., to offer what is contained in it, i. e., the wine. The construction is intellectual or supposed, when the cause is put for the effect, and *vice versa*, e. g. *blushing for modesty*; the sign of the thing signified, or the subject for the attribute. From conjunction arises that species of trope, which is called *metonymy*.

**4. Words first used in their proper sense.** (Original), words were undoubtedly used in their proper sense, for they were invented to indicate things, and by these things they might be easily explained, without any ambiguity. A small number of words sufficed, at an early period; because there were, in the age of a society, but few objects about which speech could be employed. (Morus, p. 282. ff.)

(What Ernesti says, here and in the following section, about the mode of forming tropical language may be true, but there are no facts to support it. On the contrary, the most rude and barbarous languages, abound most of all in words used figuratively. As we can trace no language back to its original, it is clear that the propositions advanced by Ernesti are incapable of direct proof, and analogy, so far as we can go back, is against him. Nothing can be more destitute of proof, than a great part of the speculations of philosophising grammarians, about the original state of language. One tells us that the language of barbarians has but few words, and very few varieties in declension, another, that they are filled with *onomatopoeic* words; another, that the roots of all words are verbs, another, that they are nouns; another, that all the original words are monosyllabic, &c. Some of these things may be true of some languages, but what can all such speculators say, when they come to know the state of language among the Aborigines? A state which puts at distance as their theories, for in matters of declension they surpass the Greek or even the multifarious Arabic; and in most respects they differ widely from that state, which the above theory would teach us to be necessary.)

**5. Mode of forming tropical words.** But in process of time, objects being multiplied, were arose a necessity of using words in various senses. For men now began to think and speak concerning those things which had hitherto been neglected, and course to form ideas of them in their minds, or to describe them in words. New objects also were invented or discovered, to describe which, words became necessary. To serve this necessity, men resorted to two different expedients. Either new words were coined, or old ones were applied to new objects. In those languages that were spoken by a people ingenious and devoted to science, or to those which by nature or art were flexible and fitted for the coinage of new words, new ones were naturally coined. Yet this usage was without exception, for had new words been coined on every occasion, the number of them would have been multiplied without end. In languages of a character differing from that just mentioned, there was a greater necessity of applying the same word to the designation of several things. Hence it is, that a language, poor as to variety of words, either in general or in particular parts of speech, employs the same frequently the same words in different senses. (Morus, p. 282. ff.)