

We hail this book as a noble contribution to Christian literature, and as a beautiful example of the great learning and acute criticism of its large hearted and eloquent writer. We recommend it to the careful perusal of thinking men, and especially of clergymen and statesmen. ✱

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RELIGION IN AMERICA, or an Account, &c., by ROBERT BAIRD.—*New York, Harper & Brothers, 1856; Montreal, B. Dawson.*—8vo., pp. 696.

The United States form the second Protestant power among the nations of the world. The condition and prospects of Religion in these States are often anxiously discussed in other countries, and a reliable work on the subject cannot fail to be widely circulated and read.

The volume now before us is a new and enlarged edition of a work published by Dr. Baird in 1843-44. The author is well known in Great Britain, and on the Continent of Europe, and has written for European rather than American readers. We think it hardly fair (unless sanction has been obtained) to prefix to the present volume the recommendatory notice given by three Divines to the small edition of 1843 in Scotland. Of these Divines, Dr. Welsh is dead, and Drs. Cunningham and Buchanan, with greater knowledge of America than they possessed in 1843, may have changed their opinions in regard to the value of Dr. Baird's work.

So far as the author has been content to compile authentic information, we owe him thanks for a valuable book of reference, well arranged, and sufficiently well written. In so far as he has expressed opinions, instituted comparisons, and endeavoured to form the judgment of his readers, he fails to command our confidence; appearing rather as a special pleader retained in the interest of America, than as a calm and honest observer, estimating things and tendencies as they are, and fearlessly telling the whole truth.

The volume is divided into eight books, the first devoted to preliminary remarks, the second to the religious condition of the United States during their colonial history, the remaining books treating of the present denominations evangelical and non-evangelical in the American Union, the development of the voluntary system of Church support, and the operations of the chief Religious and Missionary Societies. The field traversed is very extensive, and the accumulation of valuable facts such as confers great credit on Dr. Baird's industry. Some of the chapters which describe Churches and Sects are drawn up with much skill, and we have no doubt that all these chapters are written with entire fairness and equity. The chapters on the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, and on Unitarianism, are among the very best in the volume.

Dr. Baird estimates the proportion of the population of the United States, now connected more or less closely with evangelical Churches, at eighteen millions. The portion under the influence of the non-evangelical sects he reckons to be from four to five millions. The religious prospects of the country seem to him bright with encouragement.

We rejoice in all sincerity at the many proofs that are given of the progress and strength of American Christianity. But all that we have seen, heard and read of Churches in the United States, leads us to regard Dr. Baird's account of them as too highly colored. In some respects, he conceals, in others he exaggerates the truth, producing, however unintentionally, a deceptive impression on his readers.

The truth is concealed in regard to the painful aspects of the voluntary system, the dominion of wealth in Churches, the sufferings of Christian ministers, their frequent changes of position, and their temptations to a subserviency to the