

And a few sentences afterwards he contrasts Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we candidly confess, we don't like this way of speaking at all, and we are amazed that a minister, who belongs to a Church which has a creed, and confessions, and standard articles of discipline, for which many of her dearest sons and daughters have died, should have been so far left to himself, as to speak thus. Our opinion is, that the "mists and clouds" in theology, have their origin, not in the study of systematic confessions of faith, or catechisms (such as our own), but in the very reverse: the neglect of such admirable compendia as these are. Who will question that the Holy Scriptures are the only "infallible" standard; but surely Mr. P. does not mean to insinuate that there is anything in human formularies, when properly understood and used, at variance with this? He knows very well that those Churches, such as Scotland, Holland, Geneva, and France (we speak of former days), which adhered most firmly to their standards, were prominent for the regard they cherished for the authority of Scripture. Moreover, we would solemnly put it to those who are led away by modern prejudices on this matter—among what classes has the reverence for God's Word most sensibly diminished of late years, if not among such as have adopted low views of inspiration? and who are they that have generally adopted low views of inspiration? Unquestionably the men who have joined most fiercely in the crusade against creeds. The following passage from Dr. Miller's admirable essay on Creeds and Confessions,—a small work which every theological student should study,—are worthy of attention:—

"Are those individuals or churches, who have been most distinguished for their attachment and adherence to creeds, more regardless of the Bible than other professing Christians? Do they appear to esteem the Bible less? Do they read it less? Do they appeal to it less frequently, as their grand and ultimate authority? Do they quote it more rarely, or with less respect in their preaching? Where they once refer to their Creeds or Catechisms, for either authority or illustration, in the pulpit, do they not notoriously, refer to the Bible a thousand times? Do they take less pains than others to impress the contents of the sacred volume on the minds of their children, and to hold it forth as the unceasing object of study to all? Look at the reformed churches of Scotland and Holland, of France and Geneva, in their best state, when their Confessions of Faith were most venerated, and had most power, and then say, whether any churches, since the days of the apostles, ever discovered more reverence for the Scriptures, or treated them with more devout regard, as the only perfect standard of faith and practice, than they? Nay, am I not warranted in making a similar appeal with respect to those churches in our land, which have been most distinguished for their attachment to creeds? Are not their ministers, in general, quite as remarkable for very rarely quoting their own ecclesiastical formularies, for either proof or illustration, as they are for their constant and abundant quotations from Scripture for both purposes? Can the same incessant and devout recurrence to the sacred oracles be ascribed with equal truth to the great body of the opposers of Creeds, in ancient or modern times? I will not press this comparison into further detail; but have no apprehension that even the bitterest enemy of Creeds, who has a tolerable acquaintance with facts, and the smallest portion of candour, will venture to say that the result fairly deduced, is in favour of his cause."

Mr. P. says he does not intend to "analyze creeds and confessions." We say he ought to have analyzed them before he ventured to speak of the "impressions" which "prevail," and "which mostly have had their origin there." We deny that any of them had their "origin there."

We don't at all object to Mr. Peden's way of addressing sinners, in the way of free invitation:

and we would say at once, both in respect to his views, and those set forth in a late article in the *Christian Guardian*, that we do not at all sympathize with those ultra views which would hesitate as to a free and frank invitation to sinners to come to Christ. We are not aware of anything in the view we have set forth of the doctrine of election, that militates against this. Mr. P., indeed, looks on it as a sad thing that God's secret will, and his revealed, should in any case be supposed to clash. Are we not told that "secret things belong to God," but that things "revealed belong to us that we may obey and do them?" We believe that there can be no real inconsistency betwixt the purposes of God, and his commands; but there does often appear to us to be such an inconsistency, and he must read his Bible to little purpose who does not see manifold illustrations of this. But we ascribe this to our ignorance of a common principle of reconciliation. The decrees of God are not meant to influence our conduct at all, it is with the revelation of God only we have to do.

We wonder that the friends of evangelical truth should lay any stress on the popular and hackneyed objection to Calvinism, that if the final state of all is fixed, means and responsibilities on the part of man are set aside. How are they set aside in the case of the future life, any more than in the case of the present? Are not our days determined, and the number of our months with God? And how foolish do we count that man who argues that because God knows whether he shall recover or die, he need not apply to a physician, in the case of disease? The favourite distinction betwixt foreknowledge and decree will not avail in the one case any more than in the other; for if the thing is known in any sense as infallibly to be, it is certainly fixed, and the only question is, by whom or by what? Mr. P. thinks that the "impressions" of creeds—"having their origin there"—tend to "fatalism;" but who in the case before us, are the "fatalists?" Unquestionably the *Christian Guardian* and Mr. Peden; for it is they, not we, who fix the certainty of an event foreseen, in something irrespective of God.

The view given at pp. 81-84, of the manner in which the word preached, is said to be "the great moral influence employed by the Spirit of God to convince and convert," seems to us utterly at variance with the doctrine of the necessity of special grace to convert the sinner. Mr. P. says expressly, that "man has power to receive the influence of the Holy Spirit;" but what does he mean by "the influence of the Holy Spirit?" He immediately tells us, "in other words, he has power to receive the great truth, which the Spirit employs as the moral instrument to influence the soul in conversion and sanctification; or, in plain terms, he has a power to believe the Gospel;" and thus he calls "power to become the Sons of God," ascribing this power in both lights to the natural man. His application of John i. 12, to this sense of the doctrine of the Spirit, is, to us, very offensive—yea, revolting—"We are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "We are born of the will of God." Now, whether is this his secret or revealed will? That it is the latter, is seen from other passages.—p. 83. The passages he refers to are, 1 Pet. i. 23-25; 1 John v. 1, 9, 10; Heb. iii. 12.—We quote all these at length without comment, and feel no anxiety as to the "impression" they will make on every candid mind: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever: for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass: the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "If we

receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

Of Mr. P.'s interpretation of John i. 12, 13, we have no hesitation in pronouncing it most unwarranted and preposterous. He has no right to translate the clause, as if the word for "will" were necessarily understood. It is not the "will of man" and the "will of God," that are placed in opposition. The opposition lies betwixt all the three causes of adoption supposed, and God. There is the "blood," as referring to the descent from Abraham. There is the "will of the flesh," or their own natural choice. There is the "will of man," in reference to the voluntary adoption of orphans or strangers into a family. Then, in contradistinction from all these, there is God; not the "will" of God, but simply "of God." *ἐκ Θεοῦ γεννηθήσονται*. Nothing can be more gratuitous than the assumption that "man's will" and "God's revealed will," are brought into juxtaposition. Indeed, even this notion, absurd as it is, would not serve Mr. P.'s purpose, because if it is God's "revealed" will that is here noticed, then it will follow that the contrast must be the "revealed will of the flesh," and "the revealed will of man," which is positively absurd. Indeed, there is something more than absurd in the very parallelism supposed in any case between "the will of the flesh"—"the will of man," and "the will of God." If this is a specimen of Mr. P.'s ordinary expositions of Scripture, we would consider a Presbyterian visit very necessary; and the very first question put to the elders and congregation might be, "Doth your minister expound the Word plainly, Scripturally, and edifyingly?"

Miscellaneous.

COUNSEL TO DIVINITY STUDENTS.

BY A. H. FRANK, PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, IN HALLS.

"Because studying and praying are two distinct things, it is beneficial and salutary for the student of divinity that such intervals occur, (alluding to the approaching Passion-week,) and they are at such times drawn off a little from their studies; and they do well at such periods, while the season lasts, not to think of studying, but only direct their hearts to the divine presence, that they may receive additional strength of faith, grow and increase in the love of Christ, and be more fervent in God: they would then certainly derive great benefit from them. A student of divinity ought to lay his studies aside with the close of the day on Saturday, that he may duly prepare himself for the Sunday, and then devote the Sunday entirely to letting his heart wholly flow into God, and seek in every thing that he hears or reads, not to become more learned but more pious and better. If the students would do this every week, Oh what unspeakable advantage in a religious point of view, would they derive from it! But when studying is not laid aside on the approach of Sunday, but continued—the word of God does not duly penetrate into the heart; the sermon is listened to only for the purpose of catching at something by which the individual may increase his learning, and afterwards be able to talk about it to others, and in this manner he is deceived by the devil, so that he never attains to real stability in religion. But when three days are devoted, one after another, to the soul, and when the student seeks to unite his heart with God—real benefit may be derived from such seasons, like dry ground, when a continued rain descends upon it, and refreshes and fructifies it."

"If a student of divinity is not chiefly solicitous that the kingdom of Satan within him may be