

disproportion there is between them? Socrates dying without pain or ignominy, easily supported his character to the last; and if his death, however easy, had not crowned his life, it might have been doubted whether Socrates, with all his wisdom, was any thing more than a vain sophist. He invented, it is said, the theory of morals. Others, however, had before put them in practice: he had only to say therefore what they had done, and to reduce their example to precepts. Aristides had been just, before Socrates defined justice: Leonidas had given up his life for his country, before Socrates had declared patriotism to be a duty: the Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety: before he had ever defined virtue, Greece abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn, among his competitors, that pure and sublime morality, of which he only hath given us both precept and example. The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism, and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people upon earth. The death of Socrates, peaceably philosophizing with his friends, appears the most agreeable that could be wished for; that of Jesus, expiring in the midst of agonizing pains, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that could be feared. Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed indeed the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God. Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the mark of fiction; on the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ. Such a supposition, in fact, only shifts the difficulty, without obviating it; it is more inconceivable that a number of persons should agree to write such a history, than that only one should furnish the subject of it. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel, the marks of whose truth are so striking and inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero."

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### RELIGIOUS MAXIMS.

#### XIX.

It is an excellent saying of the celebrated Fenelon, "It is only imperfection that complains of what is imperfect." It would be well for those who aim at christian perfection to remember this. Surrounded by those who constantly exhibit defects of character and conduct, if we yield to a complaining and impatient spirit, we shall mar our own peace, without having the satisfaction of benefitting others. When the mind is in a right position, absorbed in God and truly dead to the world, it will not be troubled by these things. Or, if it be otherwise, and we are in fact afflicted, it will be for others, and not for ourselves, and we shall be more disposed to pity than complain—*Upham*.

#### XX.

No man ever arrives at christian perfection, no man ever *can* arrive at that ennobling state who walks by sight rather than by faith, of whom it