

tered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them." Points of organization and government are not as important as piety in the heart and life, and sound doctrine in the intellect and in confession. We unchurch no Christian believer, nor the child of any Christian believer. The Presbyterian Church unites with its stern adherence to orthodoxy a liberality towards other Christians which is peculiarly marked. We hope it will always do this. But

2. The principles and form of Church government, which are laid down in the Bible, by positive direction or by the example of the apostles, are of authority. The very facts that they occupy but little space in the sacred volume, and are not prescribed with as clear and ringing utterances as the doctrines of our religion and the moral duties of the Christian life, shew that they are not of equal importance with those doctrines and duties. "Our Presbyterian organization is but the outer case of an inner treasure," which should have our supreme regard. But the Church has an organic life, and it is an organism whose case cannot with perfect safety be thrown away, disfigured, or poisoned. Perhaps some of the shell-fish may cast their cases with perfect safety to themselves. The Church cannot so throw off the authoritative form which its Great Head developed from it. Different degrees of importance may attach to different divine prescriptions, but every prescription is of authority. And we are of those who believe that the Calvinistic, or Pauline, or Divine, system of doctrine seeks inherently to clothe itself in the Presbyterian form of the Church.

3. The principles of Church government which do manifestly appear in the Bible are the Presbyterian. The officers which belong to it, and the judicatories which they compose, have various names in the different countries and languages of the world. Great differences in details appear among them, and are entirely compatible with the essentials of the system. But the three great scriptural principles are these: The government of the Church is administered, under Christ, by ordained men, called by Him and His call authenticated by the voice of the people, they therefore representing both Him and them; amongst those rulers there is no subordination, but perfect equality of power; and the local and lower organizations are bound together in a system of subordination to the higher and more widely extended, which is based upon, recognizes, and aims after the exhibition of, the unity of the Church.

4. These principles, in their perfect exhibition, will be the ultimate system which the government of the whole Church will assume. They all existed in the apostolic Church. The ambition of metropolitans and the influence of the Roman civil polity combined to efface them gradually and widely. Apostasy in doctrine and in life was accompanied by apostasy from them. The Reformation, which so largely rescued the doctrines and the morals of the Church from the abounding corruption that had developed itself, was prevented by political entanglements from fully reforming the government, and especially from manifesting the essential unity of the Church. But "in the subordination of these Assemblies," declared old Stewart, of Pardovan (Book I. Title xviii. 6), "Parochial, Presbyterial, Provincial and National, the lesser unto the greater, doth consist the external order, strength and steadfastness of the Church of Scotland. And when it shall please the Lord to make ready and dispose the nations for a General Council then shall that beauty and strength appear more remarkable in the whole catholic Church, which is the body of Christ. Then should the Churches be established in the faith, increased in number daily, and as they went through the cities, delivering them the decrees to keep that were ordained by the apostles and elders which were at that General Council (Acts xvi. 4, 5), they should give occasion to many to rejoice for the consolation. Such a time is rather to be wished than hoped for."

And why only "to be wished rather than hoped for?" Because, as he says elsewhere:

"Till the Churches become all of one mind in the Lord, and civil rulers become her nursing fathers, in their several independent kingdoms and governments, it would seem, till these good days come, the Churches [*i.e.*, the organizations in different countries] are to manage their own affairs independently upon each other; not that this independency proceeds either from Scripture or the nature of the Church, but from restraint and misunderstandings."

"Restraint and misunderstandings" have been or

are being removed. The Council in Edinburgh contained delegates from forty one different organizations, which literally almost encircled the globe. They represented one-third of Protestant Christendom. The Philadelphia Council need not hesitate to take the highest ground as to the catholicity of Presbyterianism. If it be necessary formally to proclaim it, tell all the world with emphasis that as, according even to high prelatic confessions, Presbyterianism was the apostolic government, so we believe that it is fitted and destined to be the system of the universal Church, and that the Church everywhere should strive after and adopt it. *Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

WEARY WITH TRAVEL.

'Tis gathering near the evening hours,
Long since have drooped the mid-day flowers,
O partner true and tried!
And many a mile we've left behind
Since you and I together joined—
I here, where the pleasant paths combined—
To journey side by side.

So ardent we, so full of bliss,
We sought no choicest joys to miss
That filled the happy way;
What cared we for the rugged road,
For sharpest thorns our path that strewed,
For winds that blew, for sun that glowed
With fiery noontide ray!

But weary now of toil and race,
We'll pause amid this pleasant place,
Our jaded feet to rest.
We'll talk of all the toilsome day,
Of scenes that beautified the way
Through which our ardent journey lay,
Through which we onward pressed.

Ah! weary one! you drowsy grow;
Our toil has been too great for you,
Though blended with delight.
I fain would have you wake a while
The lonely evening to beguile,
With me to chat, with me to smile
O'er memories green and bright.

Already sleeping! Then I'll place
This snow-white stone your head to grace,
And this your feet to keep.
Sleep sweetly, love! Ay, sweetly now
Sleep with this kiss upon your brow,
And on your lips I press it too;—
Ah!—peaceful be your sleep!

And I!—a little longer yet,
Wakeful, unrestful, let me wait
Till comes the shadier night.
Watchfully, silently, I'll tread
Around the marble at your head;
Then stretch my limbs beside your bed,
And wait the morning light.

NATURE AND POSSIBILITY OF MIRACLES.

When we speak of the uniformity of the operations of the laws of nature, what precisely do we mean by "laws" and what by "nature?" The questions are important, because of the different senses in which the words are used among us, and the consequent liability to which we are exposed of giving to them a meaning in one connection which is correct only in another. In its physical sense, a law is an invariable sequence of antecedents and consequents. We see that certain things invariably follow certain other things, and we generalize our observation into something which we call the "law" of the phenomena. In this sense a law is a human inference from the observation of the operations of nature; and, as Sir John Herschel long ago remarked, "the use of the word in this connection has relation to us as understanding, rather than to the universe as obeying, certain rules." Thus understood, it must be evident to every one that a law can be the cause of nothing. The law of gravitation does not make any body fall to the earth or hold any planet in its course; it is only the name which men have given to the formula which they have deduced from their observation of falling bodies and of the solar system. It is itself the result of the classification of human observations, and cannot therefore be metamorphosed into the cause which produces the phenomena that have been thus observed and classified. We distinguish here between law and force. Force is the energy which produces the effects; but law is the observed manner in which force works in the production of these effects. So far all is clear. But then, in the moral sphere, the term "law" is used to denote a rule of conduct which we are bound to obey; and thus it has come about that, almost insensibly to themselves, many have imported this idea of obliga-

tion from the moral into the physical sphere, and look upon a law of nature as enforcing the sequences of which it is really only the record written in the short-hand of a convenient formula. We must be on our guard, therefore, against introducing the element of causation into our conception of a law of nature. Such a law causes nothing. Force is the active energy; law is the observed manner in which force works. But now, supposing that force to be, in the last resort, the volition or power of a personal omnipotent being, where is the impossibility of its being put forth, in exceptional instances, and for a sufficient purpose, in a way different from that in which it is usually exerted? If law may be regarded as the observed manner in which God has ordinarily chosen to carry on the operations of the physical universe, is it not just as possible for Him to vary the order in exceptional cases, and for a specific and worthy purpose, as it is to maintain it in uniformity? If nature be God's usual action, is there any impossibility involved in the conception of miracle as unusual divine action? or must we regard these so-called laws as chains wherewith the Deity has bound Himself, and by which He is held from doing anything, no matter for what purpose, different from what He has always been observed by men to do?

The force of these considerations is increased when we ask further, what is that "nature" of which we speak when we use the phrase the "laws of nature?" If it be restricted to merely physical phenomena, then it must be confessed that we have in them no experience or observation of any interference with the uniformity of its operations; but if, within the domain of nature, we include human nature, then we can no longer make any such admission. For here we come into contact with a new sort of power, namely, the power of the soul of man, which does continually intervene among the forces of nature, and produces effects aside from, and out of, the usual sequences of physical phenomena. All the triumphs of mechanics, of science, and of art have been won through the exercise of this power possessed by man, of bending the forces of nature to his will and using them in his service. We are continually reaching results which the forces of nature, left to themselves, never could have caused; and if this be so with men, why should we deny to God the possibility of intervening in a similar way, and so producing effects that are not merely supernatural, but superhuman? The truth is, that if the personal existence of God be intelligently admitted, and if it be conceded that He is carrying on the operations of the universe by His power, there is no longer any foundation for the argument against the possibility of miracles, inasmuch as then they are seen to be only unusual manifestations of the same energy by which the common and ordinary processes of nature are maintained.—*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*

ALL HAVE THEIR TROUBLES.

That "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," is as true to-day as when Eliphaz pressed home this fact upon poor, unhappy, argumentative Job. Our troubles are always present with us, and because we so keenly feel the smart, we are apt to imagine them far greater than those of our neighbours.

We go about our daily duties, perhaps, with hearts filled with care and anxiety, with the sharp thorn of sorrow piercing our souls, and we meet the multitude who seem so cheerful and gay that we cannot believe that grief ever comes near them. Ah! no one can be so miserable as we, so unfortunate. But, how little do we know of their secret sorrows, for often

"Aching bosoms wear a visage gay,
And stifled groans frequent the ball or play."

Many a brave heart is breaking that gives no sign.

Is it well, then, since tribulations come to us all, to dwell upon and magnify our own? If it lie in our power in any right way to remedy or get rid of our trials, let us seek with diligence and without delay to help ourselves, but if they are inevitable, then let us bear them patiently. Fretting and complaining will do no good, will make them no easier to endure. We can, at least, make an effort to be cheerful, even though we cannot forget our pain. We can all the better sympathize with and comfort others who are unhappy, if we know by sad experience what unhappiness is. When we learn to "look out and not in," we shall know by that inner sense which is born of compassion, that we are not the only sufferers in the world; that even among the gay, rollicking crowd are hearts that ache, and eyes that weep.