

tribute equally as the rest, to the support of the religion "by law established!"—The *Congregationalist* thinks John Bull may fairly claim to be a "patient ox."

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

THE BENEVOLENCE OF THE PLAN OF JESUS.

Man is compelled to action through various forces—well it is when the forces are proportioned in their operation, and reach the mind thus modified, an approach to completeness will be the issue. Beauty is supposed to exist very much in lonely proportion, and so does the holy beauty of religion, "the beauties of holiness." The intention of the divine plan is to bring out the character of man in all its fullness, to give it an entireness—hence it appeals are to the whole of our nature, to the mind as well as to the heart, to the seat of thought, as well as that of resolution.

Largeness of intellect with an icy heart, or largeness of heart with a stunted intellect it has no tending to produce. It is a system of mighty thought, and subserves the enlargement of mind—of unbounded love, and subserves expansion of heart—it withdraws its votary from the stormy agitations of the world into the lagoon of meditation, but again send him forth into the contentions and stuff of the forum. "Enter into thy closet and shut the door behind thee, and pray to thy Father who seeth in secret" is one of its precepts. And what thou hearest in the ear, in the closet, proclaim thou on the house-top, is another. Its obvious intention is to make a man thoughtful, and active, deliberative, and diligent—it allows none of its disciples to congeal in the element of his own selfishness, nor to be wrought into the faith of unthinking vanity, but preserve the beautiful equilibrium of wisdom in council, and energy in action.

To produce this result it plies every power of the mind and heart. It is a system of doctrinal principles—of adjusted precepts, of stirring facts and lovely spirit; and it warms all into life by an example, in which there were no defects, sullied by no stain, in which all the attributes of holiness combined in weighed proportions. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

We might take up any particular course of legitimate actions, and then turn to the spirit of our Lord's example for directions and motives. Suppose then for a moment we are anxious to give direction and force to the tide of benevolence, to what part of the history of our Lord can we turn without finding some illustration or encouragement in this department.

How profound, original, and expansive, the plan of his benevolence, and how unwearied was he in its execution. "He went

about doing good, it may instruct, impress, and purify us to dwell for a few moments on this subject.

1. His plan—it proposed carrying the remedy at once to the seat of the disease, he consults not the ease, but the cure of the patient; the seat of thought, and the source of resolution, he thought if all men were wrong on the subject of religion. The hearts of all men were astray. "Errors in the life had bred errors in the brain; and these reciprocally those again." "They did always err in heart." He did not overlook the many temporal evils which afflict humanity, nor did he even repel an applicant for relief from them, he did not overlook the streams of corruption which flowed in every direction, the ebullitions of human depravity met with his storm and unrelenting rebuke, he did not overlook any trait of goodness, any expression of kindness, any act of courtesy, yet look at his plan, and you find it reaches to the core of the disease and carries its healing waters to the sources of action. "Repent" or change your mind, "ye must be born again." "Born of the spirit and of water; that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Except ye be converted, ye can in no wise enter the kingdom."

The scum which mantles over the stagnant pool may prevent the issue, but cannot extract the offensive particles which lurk there. The storm which rends this mantle, does not produce, but merely scatters abroad the disagreeable odours which before lay concealed. The returning calm allows the scum again to quiver into a covering, and the odours find shelter under its expanse. The water may assume different aspects, but the same elements nestle there, its expulsion thence, and the introduction of living streams into the basin appears to be the only cure. So human corruption may sometimes lurk under a fair exterior, or be lashed into external deformity by the temptations of life, it may change its aspect but parts with none of its leading elements, the power to injure is still present. Now the plan of Jesus, proposes entire expulsion, and the introduction of living waters. Old things pass away and all things become new, and when through a series of ages he shall have conducted this plan to completeness, from the throne of his glory he will proclaim, "Behold I make all things new," the glow of his benevolence will then shine in all the hues of glorious triumph.

2. His plan proposes to bring those thus renovated into society. Solitude may be sweetened, but society must be enjoyed. It is the sigh of our nature. The alarms of a camp are preferred to the unbroken solitudes of a forest, or to the fairy sweetness of a solitary Island in the Pacific. Selkirk was supposed to have said,

"Better dwell in the midst of alarms, Than reign in this horrible place."

With a nature so strong it would have been unkind to isolate the disciples of Christianity. To whatever individual excellency it might have elevated any one to have rendered this elevation attainable, at the sacrifice of the social principle would have lacked in benevolence.

But the plan of Jesus provides as well for our social as our individual nature, so ardent is the social principle that rather than dispense with companionship it will seek it ever with uncongenial natures; nor have the principles of Christianity any tendency to weaken the social ardour, neither does it fail to introduce its disciples to the society of kindred spirits. Those converted to the faith of Jesus, are sacredly enjoined to unite with his church, and enjoy communion with souls born from above.

All societies are governed by laws and customs, law immunities, and some general end to accomplish. In every society we also find what may be called its plastic spirit. The sweetness or harshness of law, inclination to obey or disobey, the tendency to harmony or discord, will very much depend on the degree in which this spirit prevails. Under powerful operation it meets every demand without the formality of injunction, (except for the purposes of guidance,) in its absence it almost defies all the apparatus of authority, law and custom. This is strikingly illustrated in a passage in Abbot's Corner Stone, in substance somewhat as follows:—

The students of the college, of which he was one of the professors, became exceedingly disorderly in their conduct, so much so that the faculty were in constant requisition to try cases, and maintain discipline; at the time things wore a most threatening aspect. A striking revival of religion took place in the college, and many of the students were brought under its influence, and all were more or less affected by it. Mr. Abbot observes the change rendered the rules of the institution unnecessary; every one became a law for himself, and the formality of injunction was superseded by an affectionate submission to the moral rule within.

Now what is the plastic spirit of Christian fellowship, presented to us under the sanction of our Lord's authority and example, "These things I command you that ye love one another." Is not this as if he had said, "the varied instructions which I have just given, privileges I have just stated, and precepts I have just enjoined, have their principle, and are summed up in the spirit of brotherly love?"

We have our national combinations, and feel the benefit of them as we are convinced of their necessity. How complex and clumsy is that fearful apparatus of law, &c., brought into requisition in order to keep them in working order. We cannot have them, however. It appears, at a lower price, or with much less inconvenience. Compare