

of Blanche were more than half veiled by their full, heavy lids, a streak of soft blue was still discernible through the long dark lashes from whence, however emanated a spark of intelligence; and far different from the finely blended rose-hues of healthful beauty, was that bright crimson which burnt on either cheek.

Her head was raised a little from the pillow, by the supporting arm of the nurse, who with her hand still at liberty, put aside the deep frill of her cap, and the disordered ringlets which had escaped beneath it, that the sweet fresh air might visit with its comforting coolness those throbbing temples and that burning brow. It was a beautiful, mild warm April evening, redolent of life and joy and Nature's renovation, and the pale, golden light of an April sunset penetrated even through a London atmosphere, and amongst a labyrinth of high walls, and blackened roofs and clustering chimneys, into the very chamber of Blanche; and even to that confined chamber, and over those gloomy precincts, came the soft breath of Spring, breathing delicious fragrance, as it was wafted through her open window, over a box of mignonette, coaxed into early blossom by the assiduous cherishing of one who had watched over her miniature garden with the impatient interest of eager childhood. The balmy air stole gently, gradually into the sick chamber, and between the parted curtains of the bed, as though it were a thing of intelligence, and came gladly on its blessed mission to convey to the dying Blanche, the last soothing sensation she might yet taste on earth—the odorous wafting of her favorite flowers. It came not in vain, as the caressing coolness played over her face; and when it had wandered a few moments amongst the parted ringlets, her quick and laborious breathing became less and less distressing, and at length inhaling one long and deep inspiration, subsided into regular and almost imperceptible respiration, like that of a sleeping infant.

At that moment, there struck up at the farther end of a neighboring street, a strain of wild music, from a band of itinerant musicians—wandering Savoyards. Wild and touching was the strain, as it came mellowed by distance, and mingled with the evening breeze. It was "Le Rans des Vaches." To every son and daughter of Helvetia, a spirit-stirring spell, a magic melody, never yet listened to unmoved by any wanderer from her mountain land—only the insensible ear of death or of the dying . . . but it seemed as if perception yet lingered in that of Blanche. As the notes of that national air swelled out more distinctly, a slight tremor passed over her features, and at last, as if awaking from a deep sleep, her soft blue eyes perfectly unclosed, and glancing upwards towards the female form, on whose bosom her head was pillowed, she murmured in her own native tongue, "Maman! honno Maman!"

As she uttered those few faltering words, her head sunk lower upon the nurse's breast, and half turning her face inward on that kind pillow, like a weary child the fair eyelids dropt heavily over those soft blue orbs; but long after their lustre was for ever shrouded, and long after the beautiful lips were closed, and the last breath had escaped them in those few touching words, the smile still lingered there, with which those words were spoken, as if impressed by the parting rapture of recognition with the Maternal Spirit, permitted, possibly, to accompany the dark Angel on his awful mission, to overcome his terrors by her looks of heavenly welcome, and receiving from his hands the new Celestial, to be its conductress to those abodes of bliss, towards which, even in their day of mortal probation, the pious Mother had "trained up her child in the way she should go."

For the Pearl.

## PERVERSION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

ARE THESE THINGS SO?

How deplorable is that method—rather want of method—which prevails so widely, of dipping into the Bible in sundry places, without taking any view of the whole! Seldom are the different books of the Sacred Scriptures read as continuous documents:—a chapter from an epistle is perused, or a single verse is made a topic of meditation, while the subject of the whole letter is completely disregarded. Or if the entire epistle is read at one time, yet each verse or more is viewed as independent of all the rest, and as having in itself a complete sense. To suggest to a person about to peruse the work of an author, the propriety of reading it in consecutive order—that it would be improper to commence at the latter end or in the middle of his work—that in order to understand him correctly he must give his work a fair reading through—that it should be read three or four times over, and if possible, without interruption—would be justly considered as offering an insult to his understanding. The thing is so obvious, and the opposite conduct so utterly insane, that none but a madman would either need or offer the advice. But alas! how much such advice is needed with reference to the sacred volume let the too prevailing conduct of those who profess a veneration for its character, and an attachment to its disclosures, speak, Mr. Locke, the author of the great work "On the Human Understanding," in his preface to the Epistles of Paul, has some forcible remarks on this subject which deserve attention. After having been convinced by long experience, that the ordinary mode of reading a chapter merely, failed in giving him a just conception of the sense of an

epistle, he says, "I saw plainly, after I begun once to reflect upon it, that if any one should now write me a letter, as long as St. Paul's to the Romans, concerning such a matter as that is, in a style so foreign, and expressions as dubious as his seems to be; if I should divide it into fifteen or sixteen chapters, and read one of them to day, another to-morrow, and so on, it was ten to one that I should never come to a clear comprehension of it. The way to understand the mind of him that wrote it, every one would agree, was to read the whole letter through from one end to the other, all at once, to see what was the main subject and tendency of it; or if it had several parts or purposes, not dependent one of another, nor in a subordination to one chief aim and end, to discover what those different matters were, and where the author concluded one and began another; and if there were any necessity of dividing the epistles into parts, to mark the boundaries of them." And in another place that great man observes, that "if the Holy Scriptures were but laid before the eyes of christians in their due connection and consistency, it would not then be so easy to snatch out a few words, as if they were separate from the rest, to serve a purpose to which they do not at all belong, and with which they have nothing to do. But, as the matter now stands; he that has a mind to it may, at a cheap rate, be a noble champion for the truth; that is, for the doctrines of the sect that chance or interest has cast him into. He need but be furnished with verses of sacred scripture, containing words and expressions that are but flexible, (as all general, obscure, and doubtful ones are,) and his system, that has appropriated them to the orthodoxy of his church, makes them immediately strong and irrefragable arguments for his opinion. This is the benefit of loose sentences, and scripture crumbled into verses, which quickly turn into independent aphorisms. But, if the quotation in the verse produced, were considered as a part of a continued, coherent discourse, and so its sense were limited by the tenor of the context, most of these formidable and warm disputants would be quite stripped of those which they doubt not now to call spiritual weapons, and they would often have nothing to say, that would not shew their weakness, and manifestly fly in their faces." Again, he attributes the obscurity of many epistles, "to the dividing of them into chapters and verses, as we have done; where, by they are so chopped and minced, and as they are now printed, stand so broken and divided, that not only the common people take the verses usually for distinct aphorisms; but even men of more advanced knowledge, in reading them, lose very much of the strength and force of coherence and the light that depends on it. These divisions also have given occasion to reading the epistles by parcels, and in scraps, which has farther confirmed the evil arising from these partitions. And I doubt not but every one will confess it to be a very unlikely way, to come to the understanding of any other letters, to read them piece-meal, a bit to-day, and another scrap to-morrow, and so on by broken intervals; especially if the pause and cessation should be made, as the chapters of the Apostle's epistles are divided into, do end sometimes in the middle of a discourse, and sometimes in the middle of a sentence." Such were the views of the immortal Locke, and that he stands not alone in those opinions the following citations will clearly evince.

"In interpreting the Scripture, many do as if a man should see one have ten pounds, which he reckoned by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, meaning four was but four units, and five five units etc. and that he had in all but ten pounds: the other that sees him, takes not the figures together as he doth, but picks here and there; and thereupon reports that he had five pounds in one bag, and six pounds in another bag, and nine pounds in another bag etc. when as, in truth, he has but ten pounds in all. So we pick out a text here and there, to make it serve our turn; whereas if we take it altogether, and consider what went before, and followed after, we should find it meant no such thing."—*The learned Selden.*

"How unfair, how irrational, how arbitrary, is the mode of interpretation which many apply to the word of God? They insulate a passage; they fix on a sentence; they detach it from the paragraph to which it belongs, and explain it in a sense dictated only by the combination of the syllables or the words, in themselves considered. If the word of God be thus dissected or tortured, what language may it not seem to speak, what sentiments may it not appear to countenance, what fancy may it not be made to gratify? But would such a mode of interpretation be tolerated by any living author? Would such a method be endured in commenting on any of the admired productions of classical antiquity? Yet in this case it would be comparatively harmless, although utterly indefensible: but who can calculate the amount of injury which may be sustained by the cause of revealed truth, if its pure streams be thus defiled, and if it be contaminated at the very fountain head."—*Dr. H. F. Burder on the duty and means of ascertaining the genuine Sense of the Scriptures.*

"In all writings, independent passages may be urged to serve all manner of purposes. And, indeed, it has happened, that the Holy Scriptures, of all other books, have been most grossly perverted and abused in this way. Common writings have, in the main, been treated with fairness and candour enough; but the

writings of the Old and New Testament, by picking out of them little scraps and separate portions (which cannot be understood but by attending to their connection, nor urged as proofs of any thing, in opposition to the general view of the connection, without rendering the Bible perfectly unintelligible and useless); the sacred writings, I say, by being thus mangled and torn to pieces, have been represented as teaching the most absurd doctrines. The building doctrines, therefore, upon single texts, may lead us into great and dangerous mistakes. I might illustrate this by a multitude of examples."—*Foster's Sermons.*

"Nothing, in fact, tends more to injure the cause of truth and religion than an injudicious appeal to Scripture; or the attempt to establish opinions by the sanction of scriptural words or passages, quoted singly, without regard to what precedes or follows them, and thus invested with a meaning, more than probably, entirely different from what was intended by the sacred writers. Of this mistaken application Dr. Macknight has shown various instances."—*Life of Macknight.*

"The Books of Revelation were given to the world at various times, and upon different occasions. Each book was written for some one especial cause. The all-wise providence of God has not imparted his will, as human Legislators are compelled to do, in abstract precepts, arbitrary institutions, or metaphysical distinctions. The most general cause of religious error is the neglect of this mode of viewing Scripture. The Old and New Testaments, not only in the present day, but in former ages, have been for the most part considered as large reservoirs of texts, or as well-stored magazines of miscellaneous theological aphorisms; from which every speculative theorist, and every inventor of an hypothesis, may discover some plausible arguments to defend his peculiar opinion. No matter how absurd his reasoning; no matter how inconsistent his notions may be with the analogy of faith, with the testimony of antiquity, or with the context from which a passage is forcibly torn away. His own interpretation shall be to him as the Spirit of God. The light is kindled from within; and though its beams are not borrowed from learning, nor sense, nor propriety, fancy shall supply the place of an acquaintance with the original tongue, till the Scripture speaks the language of Babel to its Babylonish consulters."—*Townsend's New Testament.*

"It is certain that many of the controversies which have been carried on in the christian church, have arisen in consequence of their authors having overlooked this rule (an examination of the context), which is of the broadest extent in biblical interpretation. Every theological doctrine which has been broached, however absurd or monstrous its character, has been surrounded and supported by a multiplicity of texts, which having been forcibly absconded from the respective context, were pressed into a service for which they were never designed."—*W. Carpenter's Lectures.*

"An ingenious preacher may bring forth or create any dogma or doctrine he pleases from a text or sentence, detached from the scope or design of the writer; from the same text sermons may be woven of the most discordant texture. A whole system of theology has been deduced from one text, and a score of sermons have been woven from one thread. Nothing but the indescribable influence of custom, could have reconciled a thinking and rational being to the continuance of the practice of text or scrap preaching and reading amongst us. We are always prepared to show that to cite a sentence from the body of a discourse, to extract a sentiment from the scope of a speaker or writer, to confirm a position which he had not before his mind when those words were pronounced or written, is always hazarding an error, mostly wresting the author, and frequently just the same as interpolating or forging a revelation, and imposing it upon the credulous and unwary."—*Campbell.*

"If we analyze the words of an author, and take them out of their proper series, they may be so distorted as to mean any thing but what he intended to express. Since therefore, words have several meanings, and consequently, are to be taken in various acceptations, a careful consideration of the preceding and subsequent parts will enable us to determine that signification which is best adapted to the passage in question."—*Horne's Introduction.*

It is greatly to be desired, that our present method of breaking the Scriptures into chapters and verses, were superseded by the adoption of a continuous text; or at least, one only divided into such sections as would be obviously suggested upon a critical examination of the order of sacred writers. According to our present distribution of the text, the continuity and completion of many discourses are broken in upon in a way most injurious to their sense, and most prejudicial to ordinary readers. But we stop, and the importance of the subject must be our apology for the number of our quotations.

August 15.

TRUTH AND REASON.

Longevity ought to be highly valued by men of piety and parts, as it will enable them to be much more useful to mankind, and especially to their own country. As to others, it is of no great matter, since they are a disgrace to mankind, and their death is rather a service.