

The Colonial Protestant;

AND

JOURNAL OF LITERATURE & SCIENCE.

Vol. II.

JANUARY, 1849.

No. 1.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A REGARD TO THE PHYSICAL LAWS IN THE INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION OF MAN.

A Lecture delivered before the Montreal Mercantile Association, Jan. 4, 1849.

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1. The subject which I propose to bring under your consideration,—“The Importance of a due regard to the Physical Laws in the Intellectual and Moral Education of Man,”—constitutes one particular branch of the general science of education,—or of those principles which should direct us in the right training of the human being, in order to the proper development of reason and moral sentiment. Religion, though one of the most effectual instruments in the accomplishment of this object, whether man be viewed as a citizen of the present world, or destined for another, has its own allotted province, in which it receives ample illustration and enforcement; and it is not necessary that we should give it any prominent place under that more limited branch of the general question which we are now to consider. Yet in announcing that the particular point now to be illustrated, does not require that we should take this element specifically into account, I deem it of importance to premise this remark, which I am sure will be entertained by this audience with a cordial sympathy, that in reference to a being like man, religion must always

furnish the basis, and the principal means, for effectually training him to fulfil his destiny. Endued by the Creator with specific powers, which qualify him to receive the ideas, and to feel the sentiments which constitute religion, these can never be neglected without the saddest consequences;—and provided in the Christian faith with a divine economy for their appropriate and effectual culture, we cannot regard with favour any system in which religion does not enter as the chief element,—

“Our being's end and aim.”

2. The subject then before us is, the “Influence of the Physical Laws on Education;” and it may cast light on our subsequent illustration to explain the sense in which its terms are to be employed. First, then, by “*physical laws*,” in reference to education, we mean *the order of nature* to which man is subjected as an organized being. Were mind entirely distinct from the corporeal organization, and in no ways affected by it, we should then in the contemplation of mental phenomena, have nothing to do with physical laws; we should have only to consider, in the manner of the ancient metaphysicians, the