

THE PROTESTANT, AND EVANGELICAL WITNESS.

We wrestle with a body of sin; this mutes and unmoves even the soul to take up any duty; sometimes hems him from duty. It is so; but grace aye sways the apostle in such a soul; yet the regenerate part who abhors what sin is not on to watch to distract his government, and shut it out from duty; and when it cannot shut from duty, yet then is the Christian wofully yoked with it in duty.

Thus we see the Christian is assailed on every side by his enemy; and how can it be otherwise, when the cords of war are laid deep in the nature of sin, which can never be rooted up till the devil cease to be a devil, sin to sin, and the saint to a saint? Sin will lust against grace, and grace draw upon sin whenever they meet.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." Read the seventh chapter of the Romans, and hear the apostle crying out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and if you have never had a similar experience, you may fear lest you have been budding your hopes for eternity on a foundation of sand. True experimental religion is certainly a loathing unto Jesus, but it is, at the same time, "running a race," "wearing a good warfare," "striving for the mastery with principalities and powers," and a mortification of the flesh with its affections and lusts." Dear reader, if you do not find it so, it must be because you have neither part nor lot in the matter.

Protestant & Evangelical Witness.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1860.

NOVEL READING.

Novel reading is, in most cases, decidedly pernicious—something worse than a simple loss of time and money,—misapplication of mental power, with undeniably corrupting effect upon mind and religion. We believe that "light reading" is often and reading. Nor can we conceal our conviction, that the number over whom this habit has gotten great power is legion. How, else, can we account for the cheapness, endless variety, and number of publications, devised in "yellow covers," hawked about everywhere, whose character in all respects is fairly represented by the word trash—emphatically trash? There does seem to be a perfect rage for fiction. History must be fictitious, biography metamorphosed into the same unsubstantial thing; even the provinces of the sacred desk and theological chair are rudely invaded by this giddy form of human folly; and there it stands, assuming the authoritative voice and lofty air of the adjuster of the conflict of ages! Meantime, an American writer graphically sums up the result: "our boys and girls are growing up the rankest specimens of fiction. Their name is fiction—life is fiction—the world is fiction—and all the realities of life to them is fiction. Hence their terrible life, and often their no less terrible ends." This we may add, is a short "tale"—having, however, a most important moral. We hope parents will study it.

Now, we object to this insane demand for fiction, lamentably so general. 1. In the name of common sense, with its principles and maxims this feeling is in direct and unceasing conflict. Life is a reality; time, death and sterility are realities. Duty, obligation, the Judge and the judgment to come, the world within and around us, of spirit and matter, are realities. So are sickness, pain, misery, wants, labor, and a thousand ills, agreeable and disagreeable, with which we may or must come in contact. But what preparation gives fiction reading, to buff the ills or enjoy the lawful pleasures of this world? The practice may import a good education for indulgence in impracticable, dreamy, utopian notions—for disconcert with all the state and relations of life,—to become a grubbler at all that does exist, without one sensible suggestion to remove false misery or improve the world,—be an inhabitant of a cloud-land, ever changing and evanescent; but to look difficulties right in the face, to adjust oneself to what necessity requires, to the suggestions of practical prudence: it is, we hope, to be an inhabitant in this world—a sphere of facts and stern inflexible laws; the novel devotee can have no education. "Boys and girls of fiction" are miserable agents, whether to effect real good or remove real evil.

Novel reading is injurious to the intellectual faculties. Were even men of strong minds addicted to this practice? Dr. Hall, editor of the celebrated *Journal of Health*, says: "He lives the longest who eats plain, substantial food, and drinks pure water,—other things being equal. But many prefer highly seasoned and mixed dishes and stimulating drinks. All such persons die before their time, usually from intemperance, or wasting disease of the bowels. As certainly will the mind suffer for declining vigor and efficiency, its stimulus being novel reading and a morbid thirst for new things."

The novel-sense-aficionado flits before his gaping mind, leaves no deep and great impression of knowledge, it does not polish or impart strength to the reasoning power, its object being to excite and captivate the imagination, and produce emotion or feeling. As a member of the body, unexercised, shrivels and loses its strength, so the mind, unexercised, the furniture of the novel, which, in general, is by calculation so arranged as to excite rather than excite intellectual activity, must lose its elasticity, become dull and vacant, more progressive and progressive. Novel reading never yet gratified the fine of bright genius, aided the search or loves of truth, or improved the principles or prejudices of hypocrites, chearmering the benefactor of our race. It is a stumbling-block to intellect; for it is death to a student, after the character of a physician, diagnosis to a minister, and utterly intolerable in a logician, to be attached to this species of literature. It shuns out the world of reality from its devotees, and so hide from view many a splendid field of contemplation where the mind could be indefinitely expanded, enriched with rewards of exalted toil, and looked forward to higher triumphs. Science and philosophy, with their interesting facts, charming tangles, endless motives, and stirring music,—giving substantial pleasure, while satisfying the love of thought,—are fields too exalted for those whose tastes luxuriate in fable. The study of the real is enough for us, and more than we can hope to accomplish. The study of the real is the study of God's work, and of God in the world; the study of action is at most the study of man's imagination. The real is elevating; the latter, as opposed from God, is debasing. Be it enough for us to study what God hath wrought. Philosophy, poetry with purity to any, that here is a field beyond the power of the logical mind, full to cultivate or to exhaust of interest.

In our next we will show that novel reading is injurious to our moral and religious nature.

Tricentenary of the Reformation.

We publish on our first page this week some papers in reference to the Tricentenary of the Reformation in Scotland. The Protestants of that country, who owe much to the Reformation from Popery in 1600, have very properly resolved to hold a series of meetings in Edinburgh, during the present year, to commemorate that important event; and they not only invite the attendance of Protestant Statesmen at home and abroad, but Protestants from all lands, and of all evangelical denominations. We could wish to see the Protestantism of this Island, and particularly those who look upon Scotland as their Sabbath, represented on the occasion,

though we confess we have but little expectation of our wish being realized. Perhaps one of our fool-headed Protestant clergymen might be induced to cross the Atlantic to convey to the people of Scotland the congratulations of their brethren in this Colony, that they still nobly maintain those glorious principles for which their and our fathers shed their blood, and to enlist their sympathies in behalf of their fellow Protestants here, over whom Bonaparte is vigorously laboring to gain the ascendancy.

But if we can not send a representative to the celebration, there is another method by which we may show our interest in the movement, perhaps no less effectively. An effort is being made on the part of the Scottish Reformation Society to establish a Protestant Institute in Edinburgh, to train students in the Pulpit controversy; and subscriptions are solicited in aid of the undertaking, from the Colonies as well as from the United Kingdom. Will not some of the numerous Scotchmen in this Island contribute towards the object, and thus assist the Society to complete the Institute during the present year, as a lasting memorial of the Reformation in Scotland? Should any one feel so inclined, we may state that subscriptions will be forwarded, if left at this office.

Lector's Crusade against the Islander.

For the last five or six weeks the *Examiner*, which, according to a recent announcement, was to avoid whatever would provoke religious strife, has been teeming with communications of a highly pro-Romish character. Among these, the weekly letters of a writer signed the "Lector," possibly a Romish priest, hold the first place. They have been called forth by some articles in the *Islander*, maintaining the necessity for Protestant ascendancy in this Island, and the necessity for Protestant union to maintain that ascendancy. "Lector's" tone is indignant and defiant, his arguments largely sophistical, and his language declamatory. The *Islander*'s reply is mild, and in general satisfactory, but at times he throws in an unguarded admission, which is intended to conciliate, but really takes the ground from under his own feet, and gives an undue advantage to his opponent. The *Islander*'s wish to terminate the dispute is regarded as an indication of weakness, and the "Lector" continues his attacks with unabated vigor. Let the *Islander* clear away his foundation, and take his stand upon the eternal principles of truth and right, of liberty civil and religious, and he may easily defy "Lector" and all his auxiliaries to sustain his position. As the burden of "Lector's" complaint is the present Protestant ascendancy in this Island, and the exclusion of Romanists from the Government, we have something to say on the matter.

First, we maintain that it is essential to the safety and prosperity of this Island, that true Protestant principles remain perpetually paramount. Second, that the liberty, peace and prosperity of Romanists themselves are bound up in the triumph of Protestant principles. We arrive at these conclusions by the following steps: 1st, Christianity being from heaven, whatever is opposed to it or unauthorized by it, in matters essential, antagonistic to Christianity, and therefore inimical to man's best interests. 2d, Romanism, or Popery, is essentially opposed to the Bible, by disclaiming its sole authority in matters of faith, adding traditions thereto, and by pronouncing such a heresy as transubstantiation and purgatory, by inferring certain truths from the analogy of the Mass. Third, the *Islander* has already admitted that the "Lector" is a "foolish" man, and is a "Liberator." Let the *Islander* clear away his foundation, and take his stand upon the eternal principles of truth and right, of liberty civil and religious, and he may easily defy "Lector" and all his auxiliaries to sustain his position.

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