

PAUL, AND HIS PLACE IN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.*

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THE history of a movement, an enterprise, a Church, a community, a nation, nay, of the world at large, if we knew in all cases how to analyze it, might be resolved into a congeries of personal biographies. History is a drama, and warriors, kings, merchants, philanthropists, statesmen, preachers, and writers (to mention no more) are the actors. It is, therefore, interesting to contemplate the use, the character and career of men who originated movements of thought, or action, which have influenced the opinions, morals, social habits, commercial enterprises, material condition, civil status, and religious practices of mankind. And that the rather, as men have arisen, who, being diametrically opposed to each other in their aims and endeavours, have combined, like the resolution of forces in mechanics, to impel human society to a course of action different from what either of them contemplated.

And if those influential minds and agents lived in the far distant past, and their influence is felt down to the present time, in the habits of thought, forms of speech, and doings of large portions of mankind, it becomes still more interesting to avail ourselves of the light shed by any antiquarian investigator, or philosophic inquirer, to contemplate the native idiosyncrasy, the gradual development of thought and action, the questionings and final decisions, the struggles and triumphs of those impelling and regnant master minds.

How captivating to the curious and thoughtful are such inquiries and disclosures, relative to such men as Aristotle, Plato, Erasmus, Des

Cartes, Newton, Bacon, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Bonaparte, and others.

But if we are curious to know all about scientists, literateurs, statesmen and rulers—to those who are awake to the prodigious influence of religious beliefs and practices on mankind, for weal or woe, the mental and outward history and doings of such men as Augustin, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Edwards, are still more interesting. Yet, how completely all those enumerated are dwarfed in comparison with that one man, to whose writings they were all under obligations for whatever was truly evangelical in their teachings, and by whose example they were prompted to whatever was heroic in their lives—we refer to PAUL OF TARSUS. "The influence which St. Paul has exercised on Christianity, which completely leavens modern civilization, is wider and more lasting than that which has been wielded by any other man."

We are apt to think there could not be much to learn from men who lived before many of our present special advantages were enjoyed; when there were no printed books; before the discovery of the mariner's compass, of electricity, of the circulation of the blood, of the globular form of the earth; before the birth of modern astronomy, chemistry, geology, the science of language, and a world of other knowledge which characterizes a century which has made more progress than the twenty centuries that preceded it. Yet, we are now called upon to contemplate a man who lived eighteen hundred and fifty years ago, a man brought up in the opinions and prejudices of a narrow