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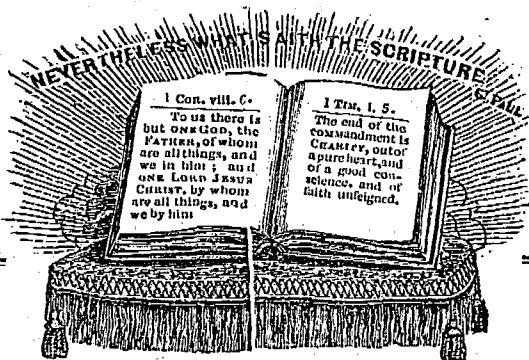
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# THE BIBLE



# CHRISTIAN

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

Vol. V.]

MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1848.

[No. 10.]

## WHAT IS IT TO BE AWAKE TO THE SOUL?

BY REV. DR. DEWEY.

Let us see what it is to be awake in worldly things. How clear is the vision of men when directed to their outward interests! How keenly do they discriminate, how accurately do they judge, how eagerly do they pursue! It needs no Sabbaths, no set times, to meditate on stocks, and bargains, and speculations. It needs no sermons to remind men of these things. Every sense, and member, and faculty is awake, and alive, and intensely employed, in the earnest toil and competition of life. Here are no faint impressions, no dim perceptions, no doubts, no objections, no evasions. To the worldly, it may be said—to those of the worldly who now hear me, I may say—you are all inquiring how you shall do more, and gain more; not excusing yourselves, and striving to do the least that will satisfy your own minds; not excusing yourselves, and putting off business, as you put off duty, upon your neighbour; and saying it may be proper for this, and that, and the other man, to go forward, and do business, and get gain. No, you grasp at the bare chance of worldly profit. You step manfully forward, not waiting for others, not walking timidly and doubtfully, and straining your eyes, to detect, on every side, shapes of evil and danger, as men who are half asleep. No; you are not irresolute, nor doubtful, nor cowardly about these things. You have no fear of pledges and promises, and forms of promise in business; no fear of bonds, and notes, and covenants, in transactions where the whole heart is interested. Many have not half enough fear of these things.

But, alas! how different from all this wakeful zeal and activity, and readiness, and forwardness, and courage, and manly decision, is the ordinary pursuit of religious things! Here, alas! men have doubts. They do not see things clearly. They are afraid of some evil lying in wait. They are afraid of forms and covenants, and sacramental vows. They doubt about prayer. They doubt about public worship. They question whether they shall not get just as much good at home. Above all, they doubt about religious undertakings, and efforts, and charities. It is quite a matter of speculation, they think, whether any good will be done. The case is completely reversed, from what it is in worldly things. A speculation there is a grand chance for the acquisition of goods. But in religious things, the noblest chance for infinite good to ourselves and others, is but a doubtful speculation. If there is adventure, or experiment, or speculation here, a thousand voices are raised against it; while the whole business of life is more or less a business of adventure and risk. If it is proposed to send the Gospel to China, or Hindoostan; why it is a great way off, and the people are a strange people, and the success is doubtful; but there is no difficulty in fitting out ships to send merchandise to China, or Hindoostan. If it is proposed to form an association to relieve and instruct the poor at home, the subject is environed with difficulties and doubts; but a company for speculation in golden mines or golden visions, can be formed without difficulty—and without prudence.

“They that sleep,” says the apostle—speaking literally—“sleep in the night.” And is there not a spiritual night brooding over the minds of thousands? There is nothing in the world so glorious as the perfection of God; there is nothing so near as his presence. And yet how many habitually walk in the sense and presence of every thing but the ever manifested and omnipresent Divinity! Eyes have they, but they see not, and ears have they, but they hear not. They see all objects; but see them not as the tokens of his power. They hear, but they hear not the voice of God. They hear every thing but those calls that are made upon the soul; the calls of blessing, and trial, and

temptation, and warning, and encouragement, that are all around them. They mark every thing in the paths of life but those directions, and commands, and exhortations, that constantly address themselves to the spiritual nature. They see not, at every step, duties, mercies, privileges, means of virtuous improvement, opportunities of usefulness, cares of the soul to be taken, cares of other men's good and true welfare, dangers admonishing them, blessed hopes beckoning them onward, heaven opening to them. They do not walk in the abiding and the living sense of these things.

This it would be, in some measure, to be awake to the soul. But what it would be altogether, our perceptions of the soul and its interests, are, perhaps, too dull for us to tell, or to comprehend. Well may we suspect that our standard of religious wakefulness and diligence is far too low. Well may we suspect that we do not yet know what it is to be awake to all the glorious and affecting concerns of our moral and immortal welfare; and that if we were thus once awakened, every thing in this world would appear in a new light; we should see with new eyes, we should apprehend with new senses, we should be aroused to an impression more profound and overwhelming than ever this outward world has made upon us. If, indeed, we can so strongly grasp this world; if we can so strongly apprehend, and so eagerly pursue the mere forms of things, the vanities that perish in the using, the trifles of a day; with what ardour and intensity would the soul put forth its powers, when it once laid hold on realities! If the charms of pleasure can so fascinate men, how would the beauties of virtue enrapture them! If glittering gold can so dazzle them, how would they gaze, if they saw them, upon the riches of holy truth, and life, and immortality! If the most ordinary good news can so delight them, what would the Gospel do! If earth can win and bind all their warm affections and sympathies, how would heaven bear away their thoughts to more delightful meditations, to more holy friendships, to more blessed hopes, to more ineffable visions of beauty and beatitude, than all that this world ever unfolded, or offered, to its most ardent votaries! Then would worldly desire, and love, and zeal be more than transformed; they would be regenerated to new life and power. He, upon whom this happy renewal of the soul should pass, would find that nobler energies had slept within him than he had before imagined to be a part of himself. He would come to feel that he had undervalued the gift of being. He would thank God as he never before thanked him, for the blessing of existence, and the promise of immortality.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

Religious ideas, beliefs, impressions, should be diligently transmitted. Whatever of Christian faith or feeling the parent has should be communicated to the child. Some persons seem to have scruples on this point. They say that all persons ought to form their own religious views in the exercise of their own mature reason; and that to teach them our views in their childhood is to preoccupy their minds, and hinder the free exercise of that reason in after years, and deprive it of the great right of unbiased judgment. There are many disputed points in religion, they say, and it is fairest and best to leave the young mind free to decide for itself on those matters in which no one has the right to decide for another. Let the child grow up without prejudices in favor of any particular doctrines that he may judge for himself independently, when he becomes capable of judging. This is wretchedly false reasoning, I think. You certainly cannot impart to your child any religious views different from your own. You cannot in good faith or common honesty, communicate to him as truth what you do not regard as truth. You

must teach him your own views, if any—yours or none. And not to teach him any is to neglect the period when the human mind is most susceptible of religious impressions, the period which is to after-life what the spring-time is to the harvest. There is an opportunity then, for which the child is not responsible, but for which you are responsible; which he cannot improve, and which, if you neglect it, is lost forever,—a loss which no future exercise of his reason can supply or compensate.

There is a tendency in our time to carry the idea of liberty to a most extravagant extent. The idea of authority is getting obsolete in many quarters—as if authority were always a usurpation: whereas, in many cases, it is a duty and the non-exercise of it is guilt.—The real rights of human beings are, in truth, so very sacred, that we are apt to think we cannot overstate them, cannot too jealously abstain from interference with them, cannot give anybody his own way to much. This morbid feeling about liberty and independence, which has various insane manifestations in our day, is coming to affect injuriously the relation between parents and children. Children must not be interfered with! must not be governed! Human nature is so divine, that it must not be tampered with, but left to the development of its own heavenly instincts, which are most heavenly—in fact, are divine inspirations—in their earliest days. “Heaven lies around us in our infancy,” says a great poet, and many have adopted his poetry as their philosophy. Leave young minds free, we are told—free as the mountain air. Shackle them not with your old-world notions. Fetter them not with your beliefs and habits. Let them alone, and heaven will guide them, and the God within will fashion them by a better model. You infringe their rights, you violate their sacred freedom, and stifle the celestial melody that runs through the strings of a free soul, when you undertake to curb and direct them, and overlay the divinity within them by your laws and regulations, and your world-worn ideas of things. Let them alone; leave them free. Such is the purport of some of the philosophy of the day, and the idea reaches and influences multitudes who know nothing about the philosophy of it, or whence it comes or whither it tends. I think we may see some of the fruits of this amazing deference to children in the absence of humility, of respect for elders, for religion, for anything human or divine, in which many of them are trained and are growing up. Young men and maidens, of quite tender years, have grown competent, and are taught that it is a free and very noble thing, to pass their flippant judgments on all time-hallowed truth, and sneer in tranquil superiority at all the gray-haired wisdom of the world as error and dotage.—Freedom and independence are, indeed, the choice and immeasurable blessings of our time,—liberty, both civil and religious, physical and mental, national and individual; but if the idea is to be pushed to the wild extreme which some tendencies indicate, it will render inevitable, by reaction, a sterner, darker despotism over soul and body, than the world ever saw before.

But the rights of children! They have their rights, sacred ones, many of which the wisdom, conscience and affection of the Christian parent distinctly point out. And their foremost right is a right to that which they most need, namely, an efficient and authoritative governance and guidance on the part of those whom God and nature have set over them for their good. They have a right to a strong and wholesome authority exercised over them, mildly, without sternness or severity, yet firm and decisive, and to be put under that rational and generous bondage of wisdom and love which may save them from the bad and debasing bondage of their own reckless caprices. They have a right to the fruits of your experience and wisdom, to have them put into their minds, wrought into their convictions and ways of life; and this they can best have done, in numerous instances, not by your reasonings, nor by being left to their own instincts, but by your authority, the weight which your character has with them—by your giving them positive instruc-

tion, and laws not to be questioned. If the parent has any definite religious beliefs, impressions, and principles, the child has a right to have them instilled from the earliest period into his mind, as much as he has a right to claim daily bread at your hands.—He has a right which he cannot enforce or understand, but which the God of nature makes obvious and will vindicate,—a right to claim of those in whose hands he is placed in his helplessness that they avail themselves of that susceptible period to give him the groundwork and materials for a religious faith and feeling. Give him, transfer to him your opinions and impressions. Some of them may be erroneous: of that point he will have a right to judge, and will judge, hereafter.—He may modify those views very much, when he comes to revise them, in the legitimate exercise of his freedom in after years. Be it so. No matter for that. Though he should greatly change every opinion and impression, you will still have done a work of unspeakable value for him. If you are faithful and reasonably fortunate, you will have given him, along with your opinions and impressions, a religious bias, a spirit of faith, an early, strong, unquestioning sense of the reality of spiritual things and relations. The particular opinions & ideas may be modified, and you need not care for that. The bias, feeling spirit of faith, which underlies all religious opinions and ideas, and which is the main thing is likely to remain. And inasmuch as that feeling and spirit of faith must be for the time embodied in some opinions and ideas—let them be our own, and do not scruple to communicate your own unreservedly. There is no infringement of rights, either immediate or prospective, in doing so. It is using your rightful authority, being simply faithful to your position, and performing for your children, in the only way practicable for you, the very sacred and momentous duty of providing for them at the most favorable time a religious faith, which is likely to cling to them and bless them, through every period of life and through all changes of opinion.—George Putnam.

## MANLY CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

What constitutes the manly Christian character? The foremost trait is decision of mind, supported by strength of heart. Religion is an active duty; it is not so contemplative as many suppose; it never retires to meditate, leaving any active duty undone. True, our Saviour retired to meditate and pray; but it was when the night had come, and no man could work,—when the streets of Jerusalem were still; when deep sleep was on every eye, when the mourning for a time forgot their sorrows, and the sick were relieved from their pain; then it was, that having worked the works of Him that sent him all the day, he felt at liberty to spend the night in prayer to God. He never seems to have given time to sacred thought, so long as any thing remained to do; and we fear that the reason why men are so partial to the contemplative duties of religion, is, that it is pleasant to have the heart engaged in meditation, while it is hard to keep the hands busy in the service of God. But it is true nevertheless, that all depends not on contemplations, feelings, and resolutions, but deeds. Active duty being thus important, it follows that the manly trait, decision of mind, is one of the greatest excellencies man can possess. Our Saviour himself possessed it in perfection; he was never for a moment at a loss, though surrounded by those who were proposing artful questions, and writing down his replies. Though spurs were every where spread for him, he walked through the world with confidence and security; and there never was a moment, when any hesitation, any faltering on his part, gave the least advantage to his foes. The reason was, that he had but one star to guide him; he had a single purpose in his breast, which he was



go to his relief when the wolf came. This habit has also a very bad moral bearing. Our words have a reflex influence upon our characters. Exaggerated speech makes one careless of the truth. The habit of using words without regard to their rightful meaning, often leads one to distort facts, to misreport conversations, and to magnify statements, in matters in which the literal truth is important to be told. You can never trust the testimony of one who in common conversation is indifferent to the import, and regardless of the power, of words. I am acquainted with persons whose representations of facts always need translation and correction, and who have utterly lost their reputation for veracity, solely through this habit of overstrained and extravagant speech. They do not mean to lie; but they have a dialect of their own, in which words bear an entirely different sense from that given them in the daily intercourse of discreet and sober people.—A. P. Peabody.

CHANNING'S CHILDHOOD.

"I can remember," says Channing, "an incident in my childhood, which has given a turn to my whole life and character. I found a nest of birds in my father's field, which held four young ones. They had no down when I first discovered them. They opened their little mouths as if they were hungry, and I gave them some crumbs which were in my pocket. Every day I returned to feed them. As soon as school was done, I would run home for some bread, and sit by the nest to see them eat, for an hour at a time. They were now feathered, and almost ready to fly. When I came one morning, I found them all cut up into quarters. The grass round the nest was red with blood. Their little limbs were raw and bloody. The mother was on a tree, and the father on the wall, mourning for their young. I cried, myself, for I was a child. I thought, too, that the parents looked on me as the author of their miseries, and this made me still more unhappy. I wanted to undeceive them. I wanted to sympathize with and comfort them. When I left the field, they followed me with their eyes, and with mournful reproaches. I was too young, and too sincere in my grief, to make any apostrophes. But I can never forget my feelings. The impression will never be worn away, nor can I ever cease to abhor every species of inhumanity toward inferior animals."

To educate a child is an office of which no one, taking the Christian view, can think lightly. To administer perceptions, and unfold the faculties in their season and proportion; to give power to the affections, without impairing their symmetry; to develop, in their right order, and to their full intensity, the great ideas of duty and of God; to exhibit human virtues and relations in so beautiful an aspect, that the soul may pass from them with ease to the venerating love of the Infinite Mind, is a task of responsibility so solemn, as to invest every parent's life with the sanctity of a divine mission.

If the philosopher's doctrine had been the true one, and the soul had been like a bird fallen from the skies,—its plumage soiled in the dust, and its forces drooping in our heavier air,—it would seem a cruel office to stimulate it to ascend again, by convulsive efforts to an element native, but natural no more. But as the truth really stands, we have not to provoke a strength jaded and expiring, but to aid and develop one that is half formed; ourselves to bear it awhile into the heights "as upon eagle's wings," and then launch it from the precipice alone, to sweep down the gale, and soar into the light it loves.—Martineau.



MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1848.

PROTESTANTISM.

[Concluded from our last.]

To all who feel any interest in protecting the rights of the human mind from the usurpations alike of Church and State—to all who feel an interest in the progress of pure Christian truth, and enlightened Christian virtue—to all who feel any interest in seeing Christianity freed from the multiplied abuses and antiquated errors which have become incorporated along with it—to all who desire to witness the advancement of the human race in the appreciation of the exalted spiritual truths of Christ's most holy Gospel; to all such, it will appear a matter of the first importance that the fundamental principle of the

Reformation—the full right of private judgment—be kept distinctly in view. We contend for this, as the one thing needful—as the pearl of great price—as the corner stone of our Christian liberty—as that, without which, the Reformation was but a mockery, and Protestantism but a name. As an authoritative guide in moral truths and Christian verities, we have no more confidence in an English Monarch than in a Roman Pontiff. We see not how infallibility can reside in the archiepiscopal palace of Canterbury any more than in the chambers of the Vatican at Rome—in a convocation at Lambeth, any more than in a Council at Trent. It is to be lamented that any attempts should be made in these days to obscure the first principles of the Reformation, or explain away all proper meaning out of it. On what grounds can any man, or body of men claim to direct authoritatively in matters of faith? Is it in virtue of the unbroken historical antiquity of their ecclesiastical organization? Then we must yield to Rome. Is it in virtue of superior numbers? On this ground, also, we should be compelled to yield to Rome. Is it in virtue of their greater learning, wisdom, and piety? Then we are called upon to ascertain the soundness of this prior claim, which rests less upon indisputable facts, than upon simple opinion. And this act itself involves an exercise of private judgment. We are surprised that men of proper feeling and common sense should attempt to stilt themselves above their fellow men. We are surprised that Dr. Strachan should seek to stultify himself and others by proceeding on the presumption that God had specially appointed him; and his clergy, as the authoritative guides in the solemn questions which bear upon man's eternal interests. Can he or they "turn one hair white or black?" Can they produce any evidence of special endowments? If they can, we will yield to them. But if they can not, why do they persevere in making themselves absurd in the eyes of reasonable men, by their assertion of groundless and absurd claims?—We are willing to concede to the clergy of the Episcopal Church (many of whom we respect,) every thing we would concede to others, or demand for ourselves. But farther than this we will not go, cannot go, ought not to go. It grieves us to see a disposition to require more, for it discovers the existence and operation of a spirit of direct variance with one of the loveliest and most prominent Christian graces.

Twice, in the brief paragraph already cited, does Dr. Strachan inform his clergy that if the Bible were freely given to every man, and the right of private judgment admitted, there could be no such thing as heresy, error, or dissent. One would almost be tempted to think that he regarded the possible absence of these things as a calamity. We must sow the seed, reasons the husbandman, else we shall have no corn in the harvest. We must have "our Church" to direct and control private judgment," argues the bishop, else we shall have "no such thing as religious error, or heresy, or dissent." We scarcely believe that he means what he writes. We scarcely believe that he means to assert that it is by the guidance of his Church that heresy and error are produced. We believe it produces some error, but not all error, yet we do not think the bishop intends to admit this. What he means, we presume, is, that without some living, speaking authority, there would be no tribunal before which disputed doctrines could be brought, and errors detected and marked; which is just the papal argument. And this living, speaking authority which is to over-rule all men's decisions he claims for his Church—"our Church," as he styles it, speaking to his little knot of clergy. We cannot forbear smiling at the assumption.—This is just the claim which the Romanist makes for his Church, but he can present some larger show of reason. The principle on which this Protestant bishop seeks to stand, is precisely identical with that which the Roman Pontiff occupies. The latter maintains it with consistency, the former with singular inconsistency and awkwardness. By the Pope's rule, Dr. Strachan is a heretic and an errorist. By Dr. Strachan's rule, Dr. Chalmers would be placed in a similar category. By Dr. Chalmers' rule, Dr. Channing would be regarded after a like manner. And so the wretched delusion proceeds. There is no man who dogmatically condemns another, that is not dogmatically condemned himself. And in each case the authority which pronounces

the judgment is of equal weight, which is just none whatever. It were better, we think—more seemly, and more Christian-like—if men were to cease passing dogmatic judgments on each other. So thought the great apostle to the Gentiles some eighteen hundred years ago, when he wrote "who art thou that judgest another man's servant! to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand."—Bishop Strachan says, that the perfect freedom of individual judgment was not the doctrine of the Church of Christ in any age.—But St. Paul says, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." What does this mean? St. Paul says "hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." What does this mean? It is strange how zeal for a party can blind men's eyes to the obvious meaning of the sacred Scriptures.

The pretension of infallibility and the attempt to exercise authority over conscience—all this is essentially papistical. It belongs to the system of Romanism, and not to Protestantism. The latter sprung from freedom of mind, and is based upon it; the former rejects the idea of mental freedom at the outset, and peremptorily demands submission and obedience. To whatever extent any outward Church does violence to mental freedom, to that extent it is false to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. And when we look over the various Protestant sects, we are painfully reminded of their unfaithfulness to proper Protestant principles. That the Anglican Church is false to Protestant principles, Dr. Strachan's charge before us amply testifies. It gives a nominal acknowledgment of the right to enquire, but withholds the reality. The system of that Church deludes and mocks the enquirer. It "even encourages a sober and searching enquiry," says the bishop, but it "contends against rash interpretations, and a too ready adherence to our own fallible judgments." A "too ready adherence!" How he wishes to gild the pill for both clergy and people! Does he not know, and should he not say, that his Church contends against any adherence whatever, even the most deliberate, to individual judgment, if its opinion should come into conflict with certain humanly devised standards?—The plain truth of the matter is, and it ought to be expressed without circumlocution, that the Anglican Church will permit a perusal of the sacred Scriptures, but it compels the reader to gauge and square their contents into a conformity with the thirty-nine articles. In such a case the articles become the actual directory of faith, and the Bible is useful only so far as it can be found, or forced, to give support to the propositions contained in them. There can be no greater mockery than to call such a perusal of the Scriptures an enquiry after truth. An enquiry! Why the whole matter has been settled as to what the so-called enquirer must believe, before he commences to read at all. It is all cut and dry—it is all ready prepared in thirty-nine articles, and he knows that if his enquiry should terminate otherwise than in a conclusion already prescribed, he will be stigmatised as a heretic. Here is a mournful tampering with the dignity of truth, and with the sacred rights of the human mind. The Roman Catholic Church will permit private judgment on the same terms. You may read the Scriptures if you will, but you must not venture to call in question the settled standards of the church. These are "most certainly to be believed," no matter what the Scriptures disclose to your enquiring mind. With respect to private judgment, then, the two Churches stand on the same footing. But the Roman Church is consistent with its fundamental principles, while the Anglican is inconsistent.

But the Anglican, is not the only Church which is untrue to the fundamental principles of Protestantism. In its imposition of the Westminster Confession, the Church of Scotland evinces its want of fidelity to these principles. The Scottish Church hands the enquirer the Bible and the Westminster Confession: The latter contains a formal and precise statement of what must be believed. Now in such a case what is the use of reading the Scriptures, only to find proof for the preconceived settled creed? And what is this but degrading the sacred Scriptures, and making mockery of the enquiring mind? Every authoritative creed is an insult to the individual mind, and an injury to the cause of truth. Every authoritative creed is a bar to free and candid enquiry. And where this

is arrested, error and superstition will as surely spring up, as weeds and thistles on the field of the sluggard. Other Churches, likewise, are in the habit of imposing authoritative creeds. But in every such case the essential principles of Protestantism are violated. The absolute supremacy of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the freedom of the human mind, both these principles are invaded.

There are, in truth, only two consistent positions to be occupied by theologians and religionists—the fixed Romanist ground, and the proper Protestant ground. The former is that of absolute authority. The latter that of perfect individual freedom. The bond of the one party would be identity of opinion. The bond of the other party, unity of spirit. Every attempt at compromise is inconsistent in itself, embarrassing in practice, and unsound in principle. With what consistency can those who reject the ancient and imposing authority of Rome, call upon other men to submit to their authority? If the Pope and the Council of Trent are fallible, so likewise is an English Convocation, or a Scottish Assembly. We must make up our minds to submit unconditionally, or we must resolve not to submit at all. If the former, then let us become Romanists, and be consistent. If the latter, then we become Protestants in the true and proper sense of the word, and assert our individual freedom, full and unlimited.

But there are consequences to be dreaded from such Protestant freedom. And they are prominently noticed by Dr. Strachan. The Bible given to men generally, with liberty to exercise their private judgment upon it, would lead them, he says, to "become Arians, Socinians, &c." And this is only saying, in other words, what the Bishop of St. Davids said some time since to his clergy. "The great source of the Unitarian heresy," said he, "is their favorite maxim that the interpretation of Scripture is to be governed by reason and not by authority." We thank you, Bishops, both of ye, for these words. We could ask no better testimony to the truthfulness of our views. Bishops, both trans-Atlantic and cis-Atlantic, plainly enough perceive that a rational interpretation of the sacred Scriptures—that is to say, an interpretation unshackled by the creeds and compilations of dark and semi-barbarous ages—would conduct to Unitarianism. Again we say, we could ask no better testimony to the truthfulness of our views, and their final prevalence. Men will not always patiently submit to be Church-bound and Creed-bound. Already have they risen numerous against ecclesiastical and priestly pretensions. And they are still rising—aye, rising by thousands. In every community are bands of Christian freemen to be found, who are loyal to their Lord and true to their mental convictions—men, who reject all human authority over conscience. They hold and "have their faith to themselves before God." In every country are to be found some "seven thousand men," true, faithful, free, and honest, who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of popular Churches and popular Creeds.

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WARE ON THE FORMATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

THE CONCESSIONS OF THE TRINITARIANS; being a selection of Extracts from the most eminent Bible Critics and Commentators. By John Wilson.

Poetry.

SPEAK GENTLY.

Speak gently! aye speak gently all,  
Nor cause a sigh or tear,  
Or painful feeling in the breast,  
Throughout our journey here.  
Speak gently! time is never long,  
And short may be our stay;  
Then let us strew with gentle words  
Love's flow'rs upon our way.

Speak gently to each child you see,  
And kindly do them greet;  
And if instruction you'd impart,  
Do it with accents sweet;  
Speak gently! E'en if they should live  
To see a future day,  
There's trouble yet for them to meet;  
Then cheer them on their way.

Speak gently to the young in life,  
Nor grieve the buoyant mind:  
There's nothing chills the heart so much  
As words that are unkind.  
Speak gently! it will pleasure give,  
Tho' bright their hopes 'mongst men,  
But should their path be overcast,  
Oh! pray speak gently then.

Speak gently to the old in years—  
Their race is nearly run;  
Then try with kind words if you can  
To gild their setting sun.  
Speak gently! tho' their ways and whims  
Are often strange to see,  
Rememb'ring that in future years  
Your ways as strange may be.

Speak gently to the wand'ring ones;  
Be kind in word and deed;  
Quench not the wax by tones unkind,  
Nor break the bruised reed.  
Speak gently! and perchance your word  
May bring to mind their youth;  
Then try with kindness and with love  
To lead their thoughts to truth.

Speak gently to the poor on earth:  
How few and far the flow'rs  
That bloom upon their path in life,  
Compar'd with those on ours!  
Speak gently to the toiling man;  
Let no harsh sounds be heard;  
Surely he has enough to bear,  
Without an unkind word.

Speak gently! Why with anger spread  
Sorrows upon our path;  
Without a peevish word or look,  
Each life its troubles hath.  
Speak gently! Oh that all would guard  
The words their lips let fall!  
We know not what our influence is;  
Oh, then speak gently all!

LETTERS FROM THE HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS TO HIS SON, ON THE BIBLE AND ITS TEACHINGS.

LETTER IX AND LAST.

The fourth and last point of view to which I proposed to offer you some general observations upon the Scriptures, was with reference to literature; and the first remark that presents itself is, that the five books of Moses are the most ancient monuments of written language now extant in the world; the book of Job is nearly of the same date, and by many of the Jewish and Christian commentators is thought to have been written by Moses.

The employment of alphabetical characters to represent all the articulations of the human voice, is the greatest invention that ever was compassed by human genius. Plato says "that it was the discovery of either of a god or a man divinely inspired." The Egyptians ascribed it to Thot, whom the Greeks afterward worshiped under the name of Hermes. This is, however, a fabulous origin. That it was an Egyptian invention there is little doubt, and it was a part of that learning of the Egyptians in all of which we are told "Moses was versed." It is probable that when Moses wrote, this act was, if not absolutely recent, of no very remote invention. There was but one copy of the law written in a book, it was deposited in the ark of the covenant, and was read aloud once in seven years, to all the people at their general assembly, in the feast of the tabernacles. There was one other copy of the law written upon stone, erected on Mount Ebal. It does not appear that there existed any other copies. In process of time the usage of reading it thus must have been dropped, and the monument upon Mount Ebal must have perished; for in the reign of Josiah, about 800 years afterward, the book of the law was found in the temple. How long it had been lost is not expressly told; but from the astonishment and consternation

of Josiah upon hearing the book read, its contents must long have been forgotten, so that scarcely a tradition of them remained. We are indeed told that when the ark of the covenant was deposited in the temple of Solomon, there was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb.

The two tables contained not the whole law, but the ten commandments; the book of the law was therefore no longer in the ark, at the dedication of Solomon's temple; that is, about 500 years after the law was given, and 300 before the book was found by Hezekiah the high priest in the 18th year of Josiah. From these circumstances, as well as from the expedients used by Moses and Joshua for preserving the ceremonial law and the repeated covenant between God and the people, it is observed that the art and practice of writing was extremely rare, and that very few of the people were even taught to read; that there were few books extant, and of those few only single copies; the arts of writing, speaking and thinking, with their several modifications of grammar, rhetoric and logic, were never cultivated among the Hebrews, as they were (though not till a thousand years later than Moses) among the Greeks.

Philosophical research and the spirit of analysis appeared to have belonged among the ancient nations exclusively to the Greeks. They studied language as a science, and from the discoveries they made in this pursuit, resulted a system of literary compositions founded upon logical deductions. The language of the ancient writers was not constructed upon the foundation of abstruse science; it partakes of the nature of all primitive languages, which is almost entirely figurative, and in some degree of the character of primitive writing and hieroglyphics. We are not told from what materials Moses compiled the book of Genesis, (which contains the history of creation and of 300 years succeeding it, which terminates three generations prior to the birth of Moses himself); whether he had it altogether from tradition, or whether he collected it from the more ancient written or printed memorials. The account of the creation, of the fall of man, and all the antediluvian part of the history, carries strong internal evidence of having been copied or (if I may express myself) translated from hieroglyphic or symbolical record. The story is of the most perfect simplicity, the discourses of the persons introduced are given as if taken down verbatim from their mouths, and the narrative is scarcely any thing more than the connecting link of the discourses; the genealogies are given with great precision, and this is one of the most remarkable peculiarities of the Old Testament. The rest is all figurative; the rib, the garden, the tree of life and the knowledge of good and evil, the apple, the serpent, are all images which seem to indicate a hieroglyphic origin.

All the historical books, both of the Old and New Testaments, retain the peculiar characteristics that I have noticed; the simplicity and brevity of the narrative—the practice of repeating all discourses in the identical words spoken, and the constant use of figurative, symbolical and allegorical language. But of the rules of composition prescribed by the Grecian schools, the utilities of Aristotle, or the congruities of figures taught by the Greek philologists, not a feature is to be seen. The Psalms are a collection of songs; the Song of Solomon is a pastoral poem; the Proverbs are a collection of moral sentences and maxims apparently addressed by Solomon to his son, with the addition of others of the same description; the prophetic books are partly historical and partly poetical—they contain the narrative of visions and revelations of the Deity to the prophets who recorded them.

In the New Testament the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are historical—they contain memories of the life of Christ and some of His apostles, and the proceedings of some of His principal apostles, for some years after His decease. The simplicity of the narrative is the same as that of the Old Testament; the style in general indicates an age when reading and writing had become more common and books more multiplied. The epistles of Paul are the productions of a mind educated in the learning of the age, and well versed in the Grecian literature; from his history it appears that he was not only capable of maintaining an argument with the doctors of the Jewish law, but of discussing principles with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers; his speech at Athens is a specimen of eloquence worthy of an audience in the native country of Demosthenes. The Apocalypse of John resembles in many respects some of the prophetic books of the Old Testament; the figurative, symbolical, and allegorical language of these books shew a range of imagination suitable only to be the record of dreams and visions—their language is in many parts inexplicably obscure. It has been, and is to this day, among the follies and vices of many Christian sects to attempt

explanations adapted to sectarian purposes and opinions. The style of none of the books, either of the Old or New Testament, affords a general model for imitation to a writer of the present age; the principle and rules for composition derived from Greek and Roman schools, and the example of their principal writers, have been so generally adopted in modern literature, that the Scriptures—differing so essentially from them—could not be imitated without great affectation: but for pathos of narrative; for the selection of incidents that go directly to the heart; for the picturesque of character and manner; the selection of circumstances that mark the individuality of persons; for copiousness, grandeur, and sublimity of imagery; for unanswerable cogency and closeness of reasoning, and for irresistible force of persuasion, no book in the world deserves to be so unceasingly studied, and so profoundly meditated upon as the Bible.

I shall conclude here the series of letters, which I proposed about two years ago to write you for the purpose of exhorting you to search the Scriptures, and of pointing out to your consideration the general points of application; with a view to which, I thought this study might be made profitable to the improvement and usefulness of your future life. There are many other and particular points to which I may hereafter occasionally invite your attention. I am sensible how feeble and superficial what I have written has been, and every letter has convinced me more and more of my own incompetency to the adequate performance of the task I had assumed; but my great object was to show you the importance of devoting your own faculties to this pursuit; to read the Bible is of itself a laudable occupation, and can scarcely fail of being a useful employment of time; but the habit of reflecting upon what you have read is equally essential as that of reading itself, to give it all the efficacy of which it is susceptible. I therefore recommend to you to set apart a small portion of every day to read one or more chapters of the Bible, and always read it with reference to some particular train of observation or reflection.—In these letters I have suggested to you four general ones. Considering the Scriptures as divine revelations; as historical records; as a system of morals; and as literary compositions. There are many other points of view in which they may be subjects of useful investigation.

As an expedient for fixing your attention, make it also a practice for some time to minute down in writing your reflections upon what you read from day to day; you may at first find this irksome, and your reflections scanty and unimportant, but they will soon become both easy and copious. Be careful of all not to let your reading make you a pedant or a bigot; let it never puff you up with pride, or a conceited opinion of your own knowledge, nor make you intolerant of the opinions which others draw from the same source, however different from your own.—And may the merciful Creator, who gave the Scriptures for instruction, bless your study of them and make them to you "fruitful of good works."

From your affectionate father,  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

WHENCE COMES THE CURSE?

But there is another complaint involved in a vague impression that God has cursed the earth, your field of labour. Let us investigate this charge a moment. My dear sir, your Maker bids you put your finger upon that curse, and establish its paternity. For the long gloomy annals of humanity furnished a world of irresistible evidence, that man possesses an infinite capacity to curse himself with every form of sin, misery, and degradation. On the strength of this evidence, I dare arraign him before you and the world, for having cursed the earth, too, with all the burning leprosy that has blotched its face from creation down, and then charged that curse upon his Maker. And I trust a short examination will make him plead guilty of this aggravated insolence. First, let us hear what He has to say for himself. The Creator asks you, what more He could have done for your physical comfort than He has done, is doing and has promised to do, for that object. He invites you to analyse the solar system and the human system, and discover any defect in His physical laws; any instance where a new principle might be introduced, which would enhance the perfection of either of those systems. Examine the machinery of the globe. See if, were it centered at any other point, more of its surface would enjoy a more vertical sun. See if you could suggest an amendment to the laws of its motions, which would give a better variety of seasons to the whole human family, and vivify the earth with more genial dispensations of light and shade, cold and heat. Call in the anatomist, to help you; exam-

ine your own physical system, and if you can show, by demonstration, that a new sense or a new disposition of your present organs of sense, would render your physical enjoyments more varied and exquisite, then the absence of that provision shall be admitted as evidence to establish the charge you have preferred against your Maker. But you shall not be confined to testimony so difficult of acquisition. If you can show that a single grain of wheat sown by man, ever brought forth a thistle or a thorn, then I will give up the argument. To be sure the quantity of grain sufficient to satisfy the labourer for a single meal, contains alcohol enough to make him beastly drunk; but if ever a labourer was intoxicated by that grain when made into bread, then I will own that God has directly and unconditionally cursed the earth. But he said that it should bring forth thorns and thistles to man. Glorious truth! In that declaration were embraced the high reward of industry and the Cain-mark curse of indolence. It anno'ced a provision of infinite grace and wisdom, to make the pleasures of sense and life the reward of activity and labour. Thorns and thistles have ever grown in rank profusion, but always upon the graves of labour, never, never beneath her feet. They have been, and ever will be, the spontaneous harvest of indolence, the evidence of inaction and the absence of labour. Two centuries ago, they spread in bristling ranks and tangled thickets over the whole wide wilderness of America; and now this world of Eden fertility is a perennial trophy of labour, which has made, or will make, that wilderness blossom as the rose.—'Tis true, thorns and thistles have not been confined to the sombre solitudes of barbarism; they have grown rankest over all the blood-seethed fields of battle. They are the only crop which any soil enriched by human blood will yield. They spring up where the soldier treads, and thrive beneath the sword and bayonet; but they wither at the labourer's breath, and die beneath the mattock and the spade. On every scene of desolation by human violence, they have raised their rough crests to testify that man has cursed the ground as well as himself. Select the choicest gardens of Europe that have been reduced to haggard sterility, and hold an inquest over the incumbent curse. See if it is because the heavens over that once favored region have become brass, and withheld the light, heat, rain and dew, that thorns and briars have supplanted the rose. See if you can trace back this curse, or any other that rests upon humanity, to any other source than the heart of man. "Whence come wars and fightings?" was a question asked and answered eighteen hundred years ago. If that inspired answer is not satisfactory, whence come they? let us ask again—Are they the constitutional instincts of human nature, and rendered inevitable by the physical laws of humanity? Were the hostile hosts that met at Marathon and Waterloo drawn into deadly collision by gravitation? Were the fourteen millions of human beings that have perished in war, jostled into that bloody fate by the revolutions of the globe? No! the earth that drank their blood, appeals to God that man has cursed every thing he touched; cursed the land and sea; cursed the iron, gold and silver; cursed his own labour, and all the productions of the soil; cursed his own heart, his affections and appetites. He was made upright, but he has found out many inventions indeed. Sin, misery, slavery, war, want, and indolence, are all his inventions; and they have cost him labour too. Watch him while inventing a new curse. See how much ingenuity he displays in converting some nutritious productions into a liquid poison for himself and his neighbor? For years he has been scheming to gratify the new passions that he has kindled in his bosom. His plans have come to an issue; and now his bark is crossing to the African shore, laden with articles that will pander to the appetites of the slave-trappers of that unhappy continent. He plies the sable aborigines with intoxicating liquors, till their dark natures burn with passions foreign to the brutes. He exchanges the deadly drug and varied instruments of death for the bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.—He fills his empty manacles with human limbs and souls. See him lead out that broken-hearted band to the cane-field of St. Domingo. What a wild, vacant look of despair is fixed in their tearless eyes, as they bow to their bondage? Watch their strokes while the iron is corroding in their hearts.—No hope of reward strings a nerve; the blistering drops that fall from their sable cheeks, are like drops of blood; they earn no bread; they purchase no prospect of redemption.—See how that proud man has cursed labor.—E. Burritt.