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## THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE MIRACULOUS.

BY REV. C. A. BARTOL.

THERE is a distinction, not always regarded, between the *supernatural* and the *miraculous*. The former term expresses a kind of quality or action, of which the latter signifies a single variety. That is supernatural which is above the laws of nature, as observation can trace and science arrange them; accordingly, man himself is in part a supernatural being. All the higher action of his mind, his imaginative creation, the freedom of his will, and the appeal of his prayer, are, in the sense of exceeding any definable rules, supernatural; while equally so is God's answer to prayer, his forgiveness of sin, and the influence on the soul of his Holy Spirit. As mechanical power is superseded by what we call chemical, and chemical by vital, so is vital by spiritual or supernatural; the ascending series of forces carrying us to that whose manifestations we cannot regulate, put into any determinate pro-

cess, or certainly embrace in any nomenclature. It is not, however, the general subject which I propose now to discuss, but only to remark on a particular branch of it, or the form of the supernatural in the Christian miracles. Even on the theme thus limited, but still very large, I can now make only two or three suggestions as to the important offices which these miracles fulfil.

First, they do something to satisfy what may be called our natural longing for the supernatural. This, with some strange exceptions of peculiarly constituted, morally perverted, or logically sophisticated minds, all have felt. It possesses early the hearts of children, in their eagerness for wonderful stories. It appears in almost every form of religious belief and worship. It is manifest in the well-nigh universal impatience of the human soul to get beyond the region of fixed order and monotonous routine. Fair and beautiful as are the uniform shape and regular ongoings of the world, the heart is not content, till, in some way, it escapes from the dominion of its established statutes into the region of original divine activity, and immediate intercourse with the highest, ungovernable, and all-decreeing One. Our very frame is thus built on wonder, and presumes upon some supernatural disclosure. The very make of man's constitution is a signal for the expectation of it, and an argument, not in any case, but in some case, for its reality.

Yet because superstition has sometimes fancied miracle, or imposture feigned it, there are those who, in the name of philosophy, would scout the very idea of any such thing, and class the New Testament narratives, and impregnable proofs of it, as no better than priestly frauds and old wives' fables. Philosophy, — pretending to chain the

Almighty to His works, forbidding the Creator to interpose among His creatures, branding a fundamental tendency of man's nature as futile, and fixing the stigma of supercilious scorn on facts sustained by all the demonstrations that make history possible, — facts, moreover, whose very intent, while impressing the Omnipotent Hand on the human heart, is to break the otherwise boundless reign of superstition, and to save the human mind from those fictions and absurdities about the supernatural, into which it would otherwise hopelessly run.

For all experience proves, that something, solid or shadowy, in the shape of the supernatural, human nature must and will have. It craves this, and, without it, famishes. To this native appetite, the miracles of Christianity furnish the true and wholesome food. These miracles, being not merely strange signs and astounding portents, but as full of reason and goodness as they are of power, by their pure and lofty character nourish and edify the soul. They who are laboring to cut off these mighty deeds, and to rob the soul of the nutriment they supply, would, by their success, only plunge it back into all the windy imaginations and poisonous falsehoods, after which, through each system of delusion, credulity ever hankered, and from which it is the Saviour's glory, by his bread of life to redeem.

From what a bottomless gulf the-hand of Christ hath thus plucked us ; over what an abyss of endless error, and devious abandonment to all vagary and deceit, we are, by the verities of his religion, safely suspended, is plain from the exposures of our own days, as well as the wanderings of past ages. The present time, of a somewhat rife skepticism respecting the Christian miracles, not alone among

the ignorant, but with some men of intellectual claims, is singularly enough a time also for the setting up of every vulgar and trivial pretence of miraculous demonstrations. Some, unable to accept Christianity on account of its prodigies, seem to have opened their breast to the fullest admission of the ephemeral stories of preternatural power, and, by a backward way, to be coming round, through the amazement of modern discoveries, to an acceptance of the very religion which they had despised. It is curious, as a striking indication of the original and unalterable fashion of the human heart, to see the Babel tower of wisdom, so laboriously reared to heaven against God's word, shaking and tumbling, as a feather, before the breath of this marvellous rumor.

It is not time, and here is not place, to pass judgment on the reported facts, doubtless deserving investigation, and perhaps only invoking some heretofore unknown law, from which this new supernatural faith has sprung. It may only, in this connection, occur to us to note their vast inferiority, in all dignity and worth, to the miracles which we received with our religion. In what port of grandeur the deeds of Jesus Christ stand apart from the insignificance or triviality, from the malice or the trickery, of these fresh disclosures! Indeed, these latter, whether offered in the way of an amusement, with noises and motions at a neighboring door, or, under the imposing figure of a whole community, rising out of like assumptions, in a far-off territory of Utah, appear but as a tinsel surface and hollow foil to the solid glory and eternal splendor of those works of Jesus which have brought God and heaven into contact with the human soul. The comparison is nothing but contrast. Until the recent wonders shall fetch us

some revelation of truth or moral power or spiritual excellence, or even earthly convenience and comfort; until science or poetry, virtue or earthly utility, are advanced by them; until the angelic visitations, which they would imply, become as precious as mortal and human influence, now at hand and everywhere within our reach; or some of the very personages called up to act at least according to their former wisdom in the flesh,— we may well, with pre-occupied attention, continue to feed our aspirations and rejoice our hopes with what is at once so much better and more available to our belief, in the sublime and gracious doings of him who was in all ways approved by God for the Redeemer of the world.

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THERE is a crisis when every faithful son of God is agitated by a fierce controversy between the earthly and the divine elements of his nature. Self and the flesh seductively whisper, “Thou hast a life of many necessities; earn thy bread and eat it; and pay thyself for all thy trouble with a warm hearth and a soft bed.” The voice of God thunders in reply, “Thy life is short, thy work is great, thy God is near, thy heaven is far; do I not send thee forth, armed with thought, and speech, and a strong right hand, to contend with the evil and avenge the good? Indulge no more, or I shall leave thee: do thy best and faint not: take up thy free-will, and come with me.” By some such conflict does every great mind quit its ease to serve its responsibilities; part, if need be with the sympathy of friends and the security of neighborhood, in fidelity to duty; and suffer wasting and loneliness, as in bleakest desert, till temptation be vanquished, and hesitancy flung aside.—*J. Martineau.*

## MARY L. WARE.

BY REV. S. W. BUSH.

THE Memoir of the Life of Mary L. Ware has now been a considerable time published, and the demand for it has been extensive. The approval of the press has been unqualified, so far as we know, as indeed we do not see how it could have been otherwise. As the book is for sale in Montreal, as well as in the other leading cities of America, we must presume that many of the readers of the *Liberal Christian* are acquainted with it. But as all may not be so, we wish here to call some attention to it. Mrs. Ware was a true saint of the liberal Christian faith. Her biography is one of unusual interest and value. It is the record of a life spent amid the common relations, and represents one who, with no extraordinary gifts of genius or brilliant intellectual endowments, unfolded a constant and unceasing devotion to duty and the welfare of others. The outward life of Mrs. Ware was not marked by unusual or thrilling incidents. The chief interest gathers around her personal character, and to the consideration of this, we propose to devote a few of these pages.

First, then, as a Christian daughter. Youth is the spring time of our being, in which everything starts forth with the luxuriance and freshness of early growth. Hope and imagination combine to paint our anticipations of the future with bright and beautiful coloring. Ordinarily it is a period free from care, and those anxieties which deepen the convictions of maturer years. But Mary Pickard\*

\* The maiden name of Mrs. Ware.

was called to discipline and trial even in this early season. At the age of thirteen, she was left an only and motherless child. Thus cast upon the world without that maternal watchfulness and influence so much needed in this forming period, we at once recognise the force of her individual character. Like an aromatic shrub, her affections by this crush sent forth a sweeter and holier fragrance. From early childhood she exhibited unusual reflection, combined with singular disinterestedness and playfulness of spirit. And no sooner were the remains of her mother placed in the tomb, than she wiped the tear of sorrow, and engaged in plans to alleviate the darkness of a father's desolate heart, who had received the blow of pecuniary adversity in addition to the gloom of sad bereavement. Thus, in the early school of sorrow and trial, did her character unfold into more lovely forms of spiritual elevation. Rising above all selfish considerations ere she had opened into the prime of womanhood, she became the solace of a father's lonely home, enlivened and made happy the declining years of aged grand-parents, by her assiduous devotion and cheerful attention, and yet, amid this darkness of outward circumstances, her spirit was tranquilised and blessed by a serene peace, which those who seek their whole enjoyment in the dissipations of heartless gaiety and a constant round of amusements, cannot understand. And here the question naturally arises, when will the young learn that the true spring of joy is within? Unless the affections well up with the fountains of purity, faith, and disinterestedness, they will never flow forth refreshingly, or slake the soul's deepest thirst. Disinterestedness always has its soothing balm, both to her who exercises it and him who receives its tokens, but selfishness

is the viper that is ever gnawing the heart with its envenomed tooth, whether it stealthily coils in the quiet recesses of domestic life, crawls into the more open thoroughfare of the street or halls of amusement. It is always the same; its bite never ceases.

But as life ripened into maturity, one stroke of bereavement after another rapidly fell upon her heart. Like the messengers of Job, no sooner was one tale of evil tidings told than another followed. The earthly remains of aged grand-parents and her dispirited father, were successively borne to the tomb, and at the age of twenty-five her heart was riven and torn from the strongest ties of life. Well might she say at this time, "I seem to hang so loosely on the world, that it is of little importance where I am." But where there is a hand, a will, and a heart to do good, occasions are never wanting. They will be sought. And even here the sympathy which these varied experiences of sorrow awaken, and the loveliness they portray are softened and alleviated by the recollection that they became the means of a brighter illustration of Christian heroism, in those scenes of beneficent ministrations which exhibit her in the light of a Christian friend.

At no period were the life and virtues of Mary Pickard more signally shown than during her brief residence in England, after her father's death. His sister, the only member of the family, was a widow, who had been dependent on the brother for pecuniary assistance. To aid her aunt in her need, a visit to her was projected by this good woman. Once among her friends in a strange land, she found them in a condition that called forth the declaration, "I am fated to find trouble wherever I go." With equal truth she might have added, and to become an an-



gelic messenger of alleviation. She literally went in and out among them blessing on her way. Especially was this true among her friends in the village of Osmotherly, in Yorkshire. Thither she went on a visit of three weeks, but as mercy never pleaded with her a second time, she remained to cheer and console. "I could not have come at a better time to do good," is her language. "My aunt's two daughters are married, and live in this village; one of them with three children, has a husband at the point of death with a fever; his brother died yesterday of the small pox, and two children have the whooping cough." And here in this secluded spot did Mary Pickard spend days and nights in watching until she closed the eyelids of five in death. This is a picture which speaks with powerful eloquence. Unconscious that the glory of this scene would gleam across the ocean to fill and awaken other hearts, or that the beauty of her life here would find its record, years afterward, in the "Household Words" of Dickens,\* she silently pursues her work of mercy.

The scene changes. The ocean is recrossed, and the devoted daughter and tried friend becomes a wife and a mother. And here again the same gentle thoughtfulness and concern for other's happiness, a scrupulous fidelity to every duty, and a growing desire of increasing usefulness mark her career. The experiences of her past life were admirably fitted as a preparation to become a stay and support to one whose thought and strength were consecrated upon the altar of religion. It was a blessed Provi-

\* A series of papers, illustrative of Mrs. Ware's work of mercy in this Yorkshire village, appeared in Dickens' "Household Words." They were entitled "The Sickness and Health of the People of Bleaburn," and were written, as we have been informed, by Miss Martineau.—  
ED. L. C.

dence that brought two such characters as Mary Pickard and Henry Ware together, and blended them into one. Mr. Ware was a Unitarian clergyman in Boston, of saintly spirit, and most thoroughly devoted to his ministerial labor, but when, through failure of health, his active ministry was exchanged for a Professor's life at Cambridge, the opportunities and calls of usefulness were multiplied to his wife. One or two traits here exhibited are worthy of notice.

Both husband and wife were in feeble health. To this were added the cares of an increasing family, and the struggles with pecuniary difficulties incident to limited means. Either of these alone has dispirited many, and crushed the soul's elasticity; yet, amid them all, they pursued their labors, not only with cheerfulness, but also with positive enjoyment. For years the devoted wife lived with the expectation that death at any moment might fall upon her husband. Notwithstanding this, her faith and trust imparted a uniform cheerfulness, while her elevated views of the last greatest change enabled her to triumph over every fear. Little need had either to dread death, for both already lived in communion with the All-holy. Heaven was made a fact to their souls, because the prayer had been fulfilled in their hearts, "Thy kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven."

One of the heaviest trials to a mind eager for usefulness, is to be compelled, through prostration of health, to suspend all active exertion. To be filled with plans of usefulness, and with the desire of labor, and yet to be compelled to remain idle, is a very grievous discipline. How often do we err about this! Spiritual influence and usefulness are not confined to action, and frequently the child of disease,

by her patient suffering, gentle endurance, radiant cheerfulness and joy, is both illustrating and teaching the spirit of religion far more powerfully than if engaged in active duties. And if any who may read this page, have ever been despondent in the hour of physical weakness and prostration, and been tortured with the thought of the uselessness of their lives, let them take courage and be cheered by those incidents in the life of this Christian woman, which teach that beauty of character, and spiritual elevation may gleam forth from the chamber of disease. For six years Mrs. Ware felt a distressing and fatal malady was consuming her life ; yet she could say, "It has been a beautiful experience ; I have been so happy, no one can tell how happy." Thus do trials "draw towards great souls, as thunder-storms to mountains ; but the storms also break upon them, and they become the clearing point in the skies for the plains beneath them."

Another feature in the character of Mrs. Ware should be noticed. While she was always filled with plans of general usefulness, and always had some object of benevolence in mind, she never neglected her immediate family duties. Few of her cotemporaries had more constant calls in the home circle, and were so faithful to them ; while, at the same time, few who lived in affluence and freedom from domestic cares, did as much in the way of active and general benevolence. And what an example is here presented to the more favored in these respects ! If this devoted woman, ever faithful in the training of a numerous family, watching over each with a tender maternal solicitude, could send forth her sympathies and throw the strength of her arm into the general objects of charity, what may not those do who have both the

means and the leisure, if they only have the disposition? But she whose hand had so often smoothed the pillow, and whose words of comfort had imparted hope in the dying hour, was called away. As we approach her last hours, we find that the sun brightened at its setting. Slowly and gradually the messenger came, and she who had been raised by great trials to a nearer approach to the Infinite — to a clearer vision of the realities of the spiritual world, and almost to a oneness with the Father of Spirits — was prepared. Life steadily waned until the opening spring, and on a lovely April day, as the windows were open that she might breathe its renovating air, she smiled and said, “what a beautiful day to go *home*.” As she grew weaker, she whispered, “I am much nearer the source of strength, and holding in her hand a note, sacred to her in this last hour, because written by her departed husband, when he thought himself dying at a distance from her, which concluded with these words, “Farewell, till we meet again;” holding this in her hand, the hour hastened, and her spirit journeyed on to its reunion with the sainted dead.

Thus lived and died this servant of the Lord. We would drop no tear of sadness upon her grave, nor raise any dirge for her requiem; far more true are we to her spirit and example, when we seek to dry others' tears, instead of shedding our own, and the most beautiful garland we can place over her tomb is a garland of good deeds. We would linger around her memory only to notice the crowning glory of the character, *its deep religiousness*. This was the controlling power of her life, and the parent of her disinterestness. Early did she consecrate herself upon the sacred altar, and her Christian faith

increased with her strength and grew with her years. Naturally of a retiring and humble disposition, her piety was unostentatious, free alike from levity, rigor, or gloom, and was manifested by uniform purity and elevation more than by specific religious forms. Few, we are told, could long be in her presence without receiving an influence from her cheerful and active piety. She lived in a constantly devout frame, and in the atmosphere of faith, so that wherever she went, it was generally diffused. Her gentle soul would soothe the harsh spirit of discord, and, like an æolian harp, arrest its vagrant gusts, and turn them to melody.

There is one feature in Mrs. Ware's character which makes it of especial value. Her virtues were exemplified in every-day life, and are within the common range of possibilities. She represents the religion of *home*. There is not a lineament in her character which required her to go out of her accustomed pathway, and her virtues can be readily apprehended by all. The peculiarity consists in their expression. With many the idea of goodness is present to the mind, but it does not fall into the heart and become bodied forth in action. But with her virtue passed largely from conception into deeds. The portrait has for its background ever-day scenes. Unlike the life and labors of Elizabeth Fry, which were exhibited outside of the usual sphere of woman's action, — unlike the vicissitudes amid which the mystic and beautiful piety of Madam Guyon was nourished — the life of Mrs. Ware, from the hour of her birth to her death, was passed amid common and familiar experiences. And now that she has departed, let us learn the lesson which her life reveals, and rejoice in that faith which she exemplified, and which

teaches that she is not lost, but only gone before. She is gone, and now

“ Another hand is beckoning us,  
Another call is given,  
And glows once more with angels’ steps,  
The path that leads to heaven.”

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER.

BY REV. W. B. O. PEABODY, D.D.

As a religious sect, we maintain that the Christian character is that which entitles a man to our fellowship, as it also prepares him for the communion of the just on high. It is not from choice that Unitarians ever stood in the attitude and arrangement of a party. We never denied our fellowship to any Christian; it was because others rejected us, that we were forced to stand by ourselves. And now we belong, as it was once well expressed, to “the anti-sectarian sect, who believe that Christian goodness consists in being good.” We are persuaded that no single party has the whole treasury of truth in its keeping. And the difficulty with each and all of them has been, that they have taken partial views of the Christian character — regarding a part rather than all — insisting on some one or two of its elements, without carrying them out into fullness and proportion; pointing out to admiration the beauty of some single features, which had no attraction to others, because connected with crippled and distorted forms. It is well to have the right faith — it is well to have the right feelings — it is well to be kind and chari-

table. Each is important, as a part of the Christian character, but each deficient—miserably deficient, if received as a substitute for that wholeness, which, like the arch in building, requires every stone in its place, or else to be shored and constantly repaired, infirm and ungraceful while it stands, and certain to fall at last. We rejoice to see that other Christians are taking the same view of the subject. Very few are the sects, at the present day, into whose confidence any one can climb by his zeal in the service of party. The Saviour said long ago, "He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me." And there are few sects who, if their general feeling could find a voice, would not say with the manly and eloquent Robert Hall, "Whoever is good enough for Christ, is good enough for me."

But this is not enough. It is not enough to admit that the Christian character is the thing most important. We should look upon sects, as each possessing some element of that character which others would do well to borrow. Each should give and receive; communicating what is good about it to the rest, and in its turn gathering from them such intimations of truth and views of duty as they may be able to impart. It is not, by collecting all within the pale of any single sect, that Christians will hereafter be one; but by breaking down the boundaries between them, by seeing and acknowledging, that the spirit of truth and the Christian character may be found in them all. Then let others take from the Liberal Christian his view, that every man is answerable for his religious opinions only to his God; let the Liberal Christian in his turn, learn from the Episcopalian his reverence for sacred things and places; from the Calvinist, his seriousness and solem-

nity ; from the Baptist, his strict endeavor to fulfil all righteousness ; from the Methodist, his earnest love ; from the Universalist, the truth — for it is one — that holiness is its own reward ; and if each sect will thus prove all things, rejecting what is worthless, and holding fast what is good, whenever they find it, the result thus produced will be better than any single sect is now. Such a process will make Christians, not sectarians ; and for the first time, since the Saviour ascended, there will be one fold and one shepherd, because the Christian character in its wholeness will be the great central object of desire and endeavor in every party and in every heart.

Here, too, we may see, what it sometimes concerns us to know, and that is, how a form of faith which others condemn, can be most ably defended. If any one should be rejected for his religious opinions, as many unfortunately have been, he need not be anxious to show that his doctrine is consistent with the Gospel, he has only to be a Christian. If he is one, men will find it out. There is no mistaking the Christian character. In the face of the most determined prejudice he will gain their confidence ; they will testify in his favor, for they cannot help it, that he is a follower of Jesus, whatever name he bears. Did any one, who knew the late Henry Ware, deny that he was a Christian ? It was not thought of ; it was not possible. So then it was admitted that an Unitarian might be a Christian. If it was so with him, it might be so with others, and the question was thus settled, and set at rest. And thus the religious character does more than the ablest argument or the richest eloquence, to remove misapprehension, to make the divided, one, and to establish that liberality which is a priceless blessing to every heart



in which it is found. In the third place, as to the means of impressing this religion in the hearts of men. We have seen that it was by his life, that our Saviour, when on earth, made his way to the hearts of men. And to those to whom Christ entrusted his religion when he left the world, St. Paul applies what David so beautifully says of the orbs of heaven, that there was no speech — no language — their voice was not heard ; but their sound was gone out to all the earth, and their instruction to the end of the world. This must mean that they chiefly relied on the silent influence of character. Men saw their lives and pronounced them good. They saw that it would be well if others were like them. And thus, by what they were, as much as by what they said and did, they gained for their religion a welcome, and sent it forth triumphant and rejoicing, to regenerate and save the world. And do we not find in ourselves, if ever we look searchingly into ourselves, that the persons whose influence has done most to give us what measure of faithfulness we possess, have been, not men of talent, not men of energy ; — by them we have been struck and moved for a time ; but those who have done most in forming us, have been people, perhaps the most unpretending in the world, but having character, having wholeness, having a well-developed moral and spiritual nature, not excessive in any part, nor deficient in any part. They dwell, and their memories after them dwell, quiet images of the beauty of holiness, in the minds and hearts of those around them, inspiring the taste for excellence, and enabling them to understand its power.

## WITNESSES AGAINST SLAVERY.

BY REV. WM. MOUNTFORD.

THE author of "Martyria" and "Euthanasia" has lately been speaking to the people of Gloucester, Mass., on the Nebraska Bill. His address is published at large in the Boston Religious Magazine. In the following passage there is evidence from many witnesses, fitly and eloquently joined together.

This great crime of extending slavery, let a man assent to it in the light of this age, and in the light of this age he shall be reproached by every generous sentiment that is abroad, and by every earnest aspiration that is reaching upwards for strength, and indeed by every true book he tries to read. He shall hear tones he never seemed to hear before, tones of just condemnation on him, from Chaucer in the early dawn of our era, and from Spenser and Massinger, and from the gentle Tennyson and from Bryant. Let him try to read, and he shall find himself the contempt of Shakspeare, and accursed by Milton, alienated from the company of Roscoe and Macaulay, spurned from communion with Landor, and become a mark for the thunderbolts of Burke. Let him try to read, and from one page and another shall glare upon him painfully the names of Clarkson and Brougham and Wilberforce and Channing. Let him try to read, and he shall find himself no company for Crabbe or Wordsworth or Campbell or Coleridge or Lamb or Moore or Hood. Let him try to read; and in Byron, page after page, he shall find himself cursed in every way but by name. Let him try to read;

and Shelley shall make him know himself one of those who —

All cried with one accord,  
 "Thou art King and Law and Lord;  
*Anarchy*, to thee we bow;  
 By thy name made holy now."

Let him try to read ; and from the plough-handle where he sings, Robert Burns shall denounce him ; and from the anvil at which he works, Ebenezer Elliot shall smite him with words strong and ringing like the blows of his hammer. Let him try to read ; and Cowper shall torture him with the Negro's Complaint, and shall tell him how, perhaps, —

"He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan;  
 He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man."

Let him try to read ; and in company with Elizabeth Browning he shall tremble at the shriek of the Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point, — a woman, frantic with grossest wrong :

"O Pilgrims ! I have gasped and run  
 All night long, from the whip of one  
 Who in your names works sin and woe."

And with Longfellow, if he should sit down to listen to the voices of the night, there will come up the tale of the Quadroon Girl, so sad, so wicked ; and he shall feel himself reminded of a region into which slaves have been carried in his own days, and how —

"Dead bodies that the kite  
 In deserts makes its prey,  
 Murders that with affright  
 Scare school-boys from their play —  
 All evil thoughts and deeds,  
 Anger and lust and pride,  
 The foulest, rankest weeds  
 That choke life's groaning tide, —  
 These are the woes of slaves:  
 They glare from the abyss,  
 They cry from unknown graves  
 We are the witnesses."

Dead bodies from the ground, horrid crimes written in the book of God's memory, great authors from their works, shrieks from under the unmerited lash, groans for a hopeless life, souls debased and largely robbed of the image of God in which they were created, — these, these shall be witnesses against the man who by vote, or word, or guilty silence, aids in letting slavery loose upon Nebraska.

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## THE CULTURE OF CHILDHOOD.

BY REV. E. PEABODY, D.D.

THE first thing in religious nurture of the young is to awaken what is termed, in general, the religious sentiment; that is, those sentiments and affections which connect man with God, — gratitude, reverence, trust, awe, submission to his will, the desire of his approval. And this part of education should begin in earliest childhood. The idea of the goodness and care of God, and his love of goodness and kindness and truth, should be blended, inextricable, with the child's first thoughts, with its earliest enjoyment of the natural world, with its earliest pleasures and notions of duty. And this, among others, for two reasons. First, because a filial reverence for God is the only trust worthy foundation of a virtuous character. When such a sentiment grows up from childhood, firmly associated with the habits of the mind and the responsibilities of life, we have the best assurance we can have, that the man will be sensitive to the calls of duty, and that, even in his neglects and failures, he will feel that he

*ought* to keep his heart pure and his life right. He will carry in his heart a perpetual monitor and guide. Whereas, to a mind thoroughly dispossessed of the idea of God, conscience will be but a name or a delusion, and duty but another word for usage or utility. Not only the religious, but the moral, life will finally depend on reverence for that Being who loves righteousness and looks with abhorrence on iniquity.

Secondly, it should be in childhood, because it is the time for it. Everything has its season. There are sentiments and affections which, left unawakened in childhood, will probably never be roused to any controlling activity, and this is one of them. If a child have no respectful feelings for superiors, or affection for parents, it is in vain to hope that they will come with age. If the conscience of childhood is never awakened by being appealed to, you look in vain for any great moral sensibility in manhood. Just so with the religious sentiment. If childhood passes away without its being awakened; if all the early associations — which, once fixed, are as difficult to be moved as the foundations of a house — the associations with *man*, and duty, and nature, and human life — are once formed, leaving God out; if this appropriate season be neglected, the man may afterwards have all the philosophy of religion in his head, but he will have but little of the religious spirit in his heart. And besides, if there be this neglect, the mind is not left vacant, but, in the place of those which ought to exist, spring up other sentiments, passions, interests, which absorb the nutriment of the soul, — a thick overgrowth, beneath whose shade the religious sentiment struggles up vainly towards the air and light. For this reason it is, that the wisest and best men have been

more thankful for nothing, than that in their earliest years their parents awakened their hearts to a consciousness of the Divine goodness and to a reverence for the Divine will. They feel that their parents did what might easily have been neglected, but which neglected, the loss would have been, practically, all but irretrievable. Of the greatest and wisest men, many a one has looked back to a mother, not wise, perhaps, as the world counts wisdom, with undying gratitude and honor, not merely for her affection, but because in a truly wise affection she opened his mind to thoughts of God and taught his heart to look up in trust and reverence to him. And though long gone from the earth, she stands for ever, in his memory of the past and his thoughts of the future, a blessed spirit between him and heaven. All of human philosophy he has since learned is but the vain trifling of a summer's day compared with those early lessons from a mother's heart, which have given to his heart a prevailing, cheerful, hopeful sense of a beneficent and guiding Providence. How, then, is the religious sentiment to be awakened? It must, obviously, be mainly through domestic influences. The child lives in a narrow circle, and whatever is done for it must be done in that circle. It is not chiefly by direct instructions, by arguments which the child can hardly attend to or understand, by commands, which awaken fears, but not affections, nor by requiring creeds and catechisms to be committed to memory, though, as will presently appear, we not underate the importance of the memory in religious instruction. It is most effectually done through a general influence, often acting indirectly and incidentally. It is the order of Providence that a child's heart shall be awakened through its *sympathies*,

rather than its reason. If it sees that its parents, its older brothers and sisters, and their friends whom it respects, sincerely reverence the will of God, that their conduct and views of life are swayed by this reverence, that for their own sake they value the religious spirit and value those institutions and usages which promote it, it will adopt their feelings into its own soul. They may have defects and inconsistencies of character, but a child readily makes the proper discrimination. It sees, notwithstanding their defects and short-comings, what their real convictions are, and they become his. He loves what they love. He honors what they honor. Their habitual persuasions and feelings respecting life and God and duty become his. There is no need of many words. Children are more influenced by phrases than by speeches, and by life than by either. But let there be a really religious tone of faith and sentiment in those around him whom he respects, he can no more escape the influence of this social atmosphere, than a healthy tree in a congenial soil can help putting forth leaves in spring. He may have very imperfect religious opinions as compared with any scientific system of theology, his practice may fall far below his own idea of duty, but the religious sentiment will be awakened. And once thoroughly awakened, it will never be lost from the mind. There is nothing so unchangeable on earth as these early feelings and associations of the heart. In after life, *opinions* may change with every year, but the original *sentiment* survives through all changes. The man may become skeptical in faith, and yet all his days his heart, early baptized in religion, will be rising up to abjure his speculations. An absurd superstition wrought into the mind of childhood, like

the funeral moss on tropical trees, hangs on the action of the mind in its ripest manhood. If low, impure, corrupt sentiments obtain admission into the child's heart, who does not know that he is almost foredoomed to a low and grovelling moral tone all his days. On the other hand, when men in riper years are reclaimed from vicious courses, it is almost invariably found that in childhood the moral and religious sentiment was awakened, and that the reformation of manhood is but the revival of sentiments fixed in the child's heart — the rekindling of the fire, long hid under the ashes, but never extinguished.

But besides this influence which comes from the general character of the domestic and social life under which the child is brought, there are three points which should be made the subject of special consideration, and in a suitable way should receive special attention.

1. The first relates to the ideas which the child forms of God. A greater calamity cannot befall it, than to have its early notions of the Divine Being perverted; and it is so because the child's feelings towards God, and so its views of religion and morality, will be determined by its ideas of the Divine character. Suppose that in the home — (and we take this illustration because the domestic relations are made by the Saviour the interpreters of those which we sustain to God) — parents are hard, selfish, unaffectionate, exacting, dealing only in commands, and threats, and penalties, meeting their child always with coldness and frowns, showing no sympathy for his weakness, or gratification in his good efforts, the child may try to love such parents, but will probably find it impossible. Home will be the saddest and dreariest place in the world to him. He will be glad to escape from its climate of



night and frost. He will seek his pleasures abroad, and the light will fade out of his countenance when the time comes again to enter his home. If he grows up affectionate and dutiful, it will be a moral miracle. On the other hand, if parents are his best friends, if they are made glad by his virtues, if he trusts them and is always sure of their sympathy, if his relations with them are happy, cheerful, confiding, and of a kind to encourage and foster his good purposes, he must be exposed to very bad influences abroad, or he will almost entirely grow up into an affectionate, confiding, and probably virtuous man.

The universe, to follow out the illustration, is but a large home, over which presides the Infinite Father. If the child is lead to regard God as throned ever amidst thunders and lightnings, his features clothed with frowns,— as if, constituting merely the police of the world, he employed his omniscience only in spying out and bringing to condign punishment the sins of his creatures,—an awful power from whose hands there is no escape,— what can be the real sentiments which will be awakened in the child's heart? The universe will be to him a terrible prison, in which there is no concealment, and from which there is no outlet. His most awful idea—one which, as it comes, will take the light out of the eye and joy out of the heart— will be the idea of God. Religion will be, not a good in itself, but a contrivance to escape the yawning gulf into which he is sliding. Such ideas fairly wrought into the heart of a child of any sensibility, and unaccompanied and uncounteracted by other ideas, will go far to blight the moral life. It will make religion a service of fear, with power enough perhaps to subdue the will, and enslave, but not win, the heart.

Let the child learn to think God his best friend, in its sins even its best friend, in his laws its best friend — as a Being whose goodness is as universal as the light or air — as one in whom it may entirely trust, whose commands are for its welfare, who is interested in all its struggles to do right, and who looks with condemnation only on what is bad and unjust and unkind and untrue. Let it have, not because it is for its pleasure, but because it is right so to do, happy and confiding and relying thoughts of God.

2. The second point to be specially regarded is the duty of obeying God — not merely doing what is abstractly right, but doing it with reference to the Divine Being, as that which he commands and approves. We speak of it here, not as a duty, but in connection with the education of the religious sentiment. Its importance is seen by looking at the parental and final relation. The love of children for parents of course depends on various causes, but among all, no one does more to determine its depths and permanence than an early habit of obedience. It is so because this habit is one great source of disinterestedness, and because without disinterestedness the affections, so far as they are unselfish, and they are essentially unselfish, must be dwarfed, narrowed, and deadened. If the child never forms the habit of obedience when the wishes of a parent conflict with its own, it forms the opposite habit of obeying its own wishes in despite of the parent. The child that never learns to surrender its self-will to the wishes of a parent, will never have an affection for that parent strong enough to make it sacrifice its own wishes. Such a child is likely, as he grows up, to possess what is a very common, but a very meagre and poor character, — one in which, perhaps, there is amiability and good nature

and generosity, if what is demanded interferes with no strong wish, or will, or object of ambition, but with a heart as hard as steel, the moment he is asked to surrender for the benefit of others what really is any object of strong desire to himself. Obedience to parents is the discipline appointed by Providence for the early and healthful development of the affections—for the early and healthful subjugation of *self-will* to the *higher order of affections*. It is by a trusting, respectful, dutiful obedience to a wise and kind parent that the affections are best developed. And he who has never learned this obedience has lost almost the best privilege and opportunity of childhood.

Just so with the Divine Being. Trust and reverence and gratitude and love to God will never exist in any strength, until we learn to surrender our self-will to his holy and just and merciful will. In the perfected character, one obeys because he loves; but the first steps which lead into the temple are by the pathway of obedience. Therefore should a child learn to obey God. Therefore should it be taught to question itself, whether its habits, its passions, its feeling and purposes are such as God would desire to see in his children,—to do it, of course, not as a slave before a master, but as a trusting and dutiful child to an affectionate parent. In doing this, the child will learn to surrender its self-will to the highest law and holiest love. The best sentiments of religion will be cherished and established in its heart. And above all, it will from childhood associate the practice of duty in its daily life with the approval of God. It will be saved from the disastrous mistake of separating morals and religion, and will feel that they are as closely united as the stream and the fountain,—as motive and act.

3. The third point relates to the subject of prayer. Prayer keeps alive a sense of dependence on God. It brings the child consciously into the Divine presence, as a creature of God's care and love. It is essentially a grateful, trusting, submissive consciousness of dependence on God. It connects earth with heaven, and the blessings of life with their Author. It awakens in the soul the habitual feeling, that over its daily paths and over its midnight sleep is the care of the Infinite Father; and never can the child learn too early to look for protection and guidance and help to that Being to whom we must all look, and on whose mercy parent and child are alike dependent. The prayer of a child may be no more than a sentence, than the verse of a hymn; but, if possible, let it be able never to remember the time when it did not feel that there was one Being to whom it might look up, not only as the most powerful and wise, but the most beneficent, Being of the universe. Let it be able never to remember the time when it did not habitually pray to God.

The great object in all these cases is to awaken certain sentiments, to give direction to the thoughts, and to lead the child to form certain habits of act and thought for itself,—so that throughout its days it may feel that it is a child of God, living under a heavenly care, and in every just and useful and truthful purpose sure of the approval and favor of God.

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ADVERSITY is sometimes hard upon a man; but for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity.—*Carlyle.*

## BOOK NOTICES.

**REGENERATION.** By Edmund H. Sears. Boston : Crosby, Nichols & Co. Sold in Montreal, by C. Bryson, St. Francois Xavier Street.

**THIS** is an Essay of 248 pages, prepared at the request of the Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association. Although produced under such auspices, and written by a Unitarian minister, it is not bound to the common track of Unitarian controversy. It is well conceived and well written, in tone eminently Christian, recognising the deep and dreadful human experience of sin, and indicating the gospel instrumentalities for its removal, and for spiritual renewal. We need scarcely say that it rejects the Calvinistic dogma of hereditary *guilt*. But while it does so, it accepts the idea of transmitted propensities to evil. At this point it becomes distinguishable from the views taught by a large class of Unitarians. From some orthodox quarters great satisfaction has been expressed at the appearance of this book, on account of its assumed approach to more profound views of human nature, and of the significance of the Gospel in relation thereto. Without vouching for all the positions of the Essay, we can truly say that we welcome its approach, and are thankful to the Unitarian Association for having given it to the public. It is not possible, we think, for any one to give it a deliberate perusal without being quickened to serious thought on that most momentous of all subjects — the salvation of the soul. Tenderness toward old dogmatic land-marks is not a characteristic of our times. Modern Calvinism is fast yielding up the stronghold of the ancient creed, and advancing to views of Christianity more humane, more reasonable, and more scriptural. The influences which are modifying Calvinism may modify other forms, and by destroying sectarian peculiarities, leave the broad truths of the Gospel obviously common to all. So let it be.

**THE POTIPHAR PAPERS.** New York: G. P. Putnam & Co. 1853.

A WELL executed Satire, re-printed from "Putnam's Monthly Magazine," and directed against those terrible abuses of life which wealth sometimes generates, when it comes faster than the wisdom and culture requisite for its right employment and enjoyment. Paul Potiphar is a New York merchant, who, by a run of commercial prosperity, has acquired an ample fortune, whereupon Mrs. Potiphar is fired with the ambition of being as "good as anybody," and in all matters of house, furniture, dress, equipage, and the like, vies with the best of "our best society." Mr. P., indeed, "meditates" occasionally, and feels that a great house filled with gaudy and unmeaning furniture is not "a home," but he quietly yields to his wife's more ambitious ways. Consistently with her style of life, Mrs. Potiphar regulates her church-going by fashionable considerations, and the book is dedicated to the Rev. Cream Cheese, the clergyman of a fashionable church, whom she finds a sweet spoken and charming man, and by whom she is duly counselled in such delicate details as the choice of a becoming velvet for the binding of her prayer-book. We wish we could be rid of such rampant follies without satire, but if we cannot, let it come. The copy before us is from the store of Mr. Dawson, Place d'Armes.

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**FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTRY AT LARGE IN THE CITY OF PORTLAND.**

**THE NINTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER AT LARGE IN LOWELL.**

**TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTRY AT LARGE IN THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE.**

WE have to acknowledge the receipt of the foregoing interesting and valuable documents.

## INTELLIGENCE.

## ENGLAND.

A MEMORIAL has lately been presented to the authorities of the University of Cambridge, England, praying for a more enlarged system of granting degrees. It bears but six names, but these are of persons who have been educated at Cambridge, and have been deprived of graduation by the operation of the tests. The memorialists' signatures are headed by the name of James Heywood, M.P., who signs himself "Senior Optime in 1833, of Trinity College, Cambridge." Of the two great national Universities in England, it is well known that Oxford is the chosen seat of High Churchism, and the hot-bed of orthodoxy, according to the established symbols. Oxford fences her portals before the pupil enters, and assures herself of the youth's soundness of faith before he treads any of her halls. Yet, strange to say, she is occasionally delivered of the greatest heretics, for it is out of her bosom that the Newmans and the Froudes come to disturb the repose of English Christendom. At Cambridge no religious tests are imposed at entrance, nor until the period for taking the Bachelor's degree; so that the conscientious non-conformist whose ability and diligence have merited the degree is denied the honor. We believe there is but a small chance at present that the prayer of the memorial will be complied with. Of the whole number of resident Dissenters at Cambridge University, it is said that the majority belong to the Unitarian body.

ACCORDING to the census of Religious Worship, taken on Sunday, 30th March, 1851, there were present at the most numerous attended services of public worship in England and Wales, 2,971,258 members of Church of England; 3,110,782 Protestant Dissenters; 249,389 Roman Catholics; 24,793 other Religious Denominations.

## UNITED STATES.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.—FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR FUND.—In our March number we took occasion

to mention the proposition which had been accepted by the American Unitarian Association, to raise the sum of fifty thousand dollars, for the purpose of printing, publishing, and distributing books in the service of Liberal Christianity. The adjourned meeting was held on 1st March last, and the prospect seems fair for the accomplishment of the purpose. From the report in the New York *Christian Inquirer*, we read that George B. Emerson, Esq., of Boston, from the committee appointed at the last meeting for the raising of a general committee, to mature and carry into effect a plan to realize the objects of this meeting, read an able and interesting report on the subject, setting forth the need of this movement, and the good to be accomplished by it. The report embodied valuable statistics of the operations of the American Tract Society, of the Episcopal Sunday-school Union, and of the Methodist Book Concern, showing the large sums of money employed by those establishments, the great number of book agents and colporteurs employed, and the vast numbers of families visited, and of tracts and books distributed by them. The American Tract Society, it was stated, employs *six hundred and forty-two* persons in distributing tracts. One of these societies had distributed *four hundred and eighty-seven thousand* books in one year. The Episcopal Sunday-school Union expends \$31,000 annually in the publication, sale, and distribution of books. The Methodist Book Concern has invested \$600,000 in its various operations. Its annual business is \$25,000. The operations of these societies proved that such a movement, as that contemplated by the American Unitarian Association, can be conducted with success, and rendered permanent and profitable. The report dwelt in a forcible manner upon the duty of the Unitarians, professing to be *liberal*, and holding liberal sentiments, to *do more* for the cause of liberal principles than had hitherto been done.

A pamphlet has reached us relating to this subject, in which we find the names of a large general committee, composed of persons from various parts of the country. On this committee we observe the name of George H. Frothingham, Esq., of Montreal, through whom any Canadian contribution to the fund may be forwarded.