

## Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

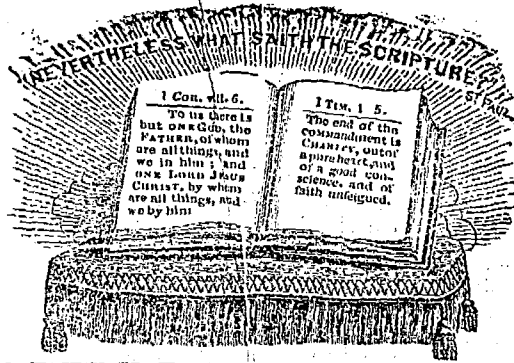
The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for scanning. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of scanning are checked below.

- Coloured covers /  
Couverture de couleur
- Covers damaged /  
Couverture endommagée
- Covers restored and/or laminated /  
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- Cover title missing /  
Le titre de couverture manque
- Coloured maps /  
Cartes géographiques en couleur
- Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black) /  
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- Coloured plates and/or illustrations /  
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- Bound with other material /  
Relié avec d'autres documents
- Only edition available /  
Seule édition disponible
- Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion  
along interior margin / La reliure serrée peut  
causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la  
marge intérieure.
  
- Additional comments /  
Commentaires supplémentaires:

L'Institut a numérisé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de numérisation sont indiqués ci-dessous.

- Coloured pages / Pages de couleur
- Pages damaged / Pages endommagées
- Pages restored and/or laminated /  
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/  
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- Pages detached / Pages détachées
- Showthrough / Transparence
- Quality of print varies /  
Qualité inégale de l'impression
  
- Includes supplementary materials /  
Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
  
- Blank leaves added during restorations may  
appear within the text. Whenever possible, these  
have been omitted from scanning / Il se peut que  
certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une  
restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais,  
lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas  
été numérisées.

# THE BIBLE



# CHRISTIAN

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1848.

No. 4.

## Poetry.

### LIVE TO DO GOOD.

BY GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

Live to do good: but not with thought to win  
From man reward of any kindness done:  
Remember Him who died on cross for sin—  
The merciful, the meek, rejected One;  
When he was slain for crime of doing good,  
Canst thou expect return of gratitude?

Do good to all; but, while thou servest best,  
And at thy greatest cost, nerve thee to bear,  
When thine own heart with anguish is opprest,  
The cruel taunt, the cold averted air,  
From lips which thou has thought in hope to  
pray,  
And eyes whose sorrows thou hast wiped away.

Still do thou good; but for His holy sake  
Who died for thine; fixing thy purpose ever  
High as his throne, no wrath of man can shake  
So shall he own thy generous endeavor,  
And take thee to His conqueror's glory up,  
When thou hast shared the Saviour's bitter cup.

Do nought but good; for such the noble strife  
Of virtue is, 'gainst wrong to venture love,  
And for thy foe devote a brother's life,  
Content to wait the recompense above;  
Brave for the truth, to fiercest insult meek,  
In mercy strong, in vengeance only weak.

### PASSING AWAY.

BY L. M. SIGOURNEY.

"The fashion of this world passeth away."  
1 CORINTHIANS, VII., 31.

A Rose upon her mossy stem,  
Fair Queen of Flora's gay domain,  
All graceful wore her diadem,  
The brightest 'mid the brilliant train;  
But evening came, with frosty breath,  
And, ere the quick return of day,  
Her beauties, in the blight of death,  
Had pass'd away.

I saw, when morning gemmed the sky,  
A fair young creature gladly rove,  
Her moving lip was melody,  
Her varying smile the charm of love:  
At eve I came—bit on her bed  
She drooped, with forehead pale as clay—  
"What dost thou here?"—she faintly said,  
"Passing away."

I looked on manhood's towering form  
Like some tall oak when tempests blow,  
That scorns the fury of the storm  
And strongly strikes its root below.  
Again I looked—with idiot cower  
His vacant eye's unmeaning ray  
Told how the mind of godlike power  
Passeth away.

O earth! no better wealth hast thou?  
No balsam for the heart that bleeds?  
Fade all thy brightest things away?  
Fail all thy props like bruised reeds?  
The soul made answer—"Hopes are mine  
To dwell in realms of changeless day,  
Where lips have never breathed the sound,  
"Passing away?"

### WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?—We refer once more to this subject, it being within our knowledge that the inquiry has not been without interest to many readers. What we desire farther to inculcate is that Christianity is no less a code for the practical duties of every-day life, than it is of principles for the government of the heart and the affections. We repeat that religion consists not in the strict belief of cer-

tain doctrines, or in outward co-operation with Church organizations; but in the "life and conversation" of a man. He greatly mistakes the character of genuine religion, and sadly fails to appreciate its peerless beauty, who supposes that connexion with a Church, and mere conformity to its rules and discipline, constitute him a Christian. The mistake it is to be feared is no less general than it is fatal. Too many, at this day, rely upon Church membership, not only as an assurance to the world that they are Christians, but as a passport to future and eternal happiness. If we are wrong, then the yoke of the Redeemer is light indeed, and his repeated exhortations to self-denial are a mere waste of words.

For such a profession of Christianity in this day involves no self-denial, but rather otherwise. Now, at least in this country, Church membership is reputation. Religion walks abroad in her silver slippers. To go to Church is but too fashionable, and but too many Church edifices seem to be built exclusively for the fashionable and wealthy, and for their accommodation only. The fellowship of men, without reference to other considerations than their oneness of faith and attachment to the "despised Galilean," as inculcated in the Gospel, is in too many instances entirely lost sight of. The communion of saints, the glory of primitive Christianity and the professed creed of the Protestant Church, is virtually becoming obsolete. People now-a-days talk much of religion, but mournfully do they halt in its practice. Men dispute loudly and earnestly about creeds, but the imperative requirement of the Gospel—the authentic, absolute command of the Redeemer, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only"—this, which is the substance, the life's blood, the bone and sinew of Christianity, is strangely and fatally overlooked. Men wear the livery of religion, because it is admired; but the spirit of devotion, that which animates the sinless intelligences of Heaven and makes it their delight to do Jehovah's will, is but too generally lacking among Christians.

Now we believe that Christianity should dwell in men's hearts as an irresistible impulse to good and virtuous actions; and as a principle too divinely imperative to be swerved from with impunity. To "do good unto all men" is something more than to live a blameless life, and it implies benevolence to men's bodies as well as to their souls—a care for the perishable as well as for the imperishable part of our kind, seeing that each alike is the workmanship of His hands and the object of our common Father's regard. Compassion for the poor and needy, the down-trodden and the outcasts of society, those whom the world has spurned or forgotten, the afflicted and distressed—this, a hundred-fold more than the inculcation of doctrine (though that was duly cared for), was the daily practice and the manifest delight of the great Author of our holy religion. Such acts of disinterested benevolence constituted the great moral miracles which, perhaps more than any other, commended his religion to all who observed his life. Contemplating the conduct of the perfect exemplar of Christianity, we might an Apostle exclaim, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is to visit the fatherless and the widows."

It will be conceded that that cannot be true religion which does not prompt a man to imitate the example of the immaculate Redeemer. The true Christian, like Christ, must "go about doing good," for "He hath set us an example that we should walk in his steps." He who lacks grace or self-denial to emulate the example of Christ breathes not His spirit and is none of His. The true and sincere follower of the Redeemer will act as the Redeemer acted; will go whithersoever he went, and with reverent gladness tread in the luminous imprint of his footsteps. He will sedulously strive, will watch for opportunities, to "raise the fallen, cheer the faint"; will kindly lift up from their social and moral degradation the outcast and scorned; from this he will not be deterred by the atheist's laugh, the coxcomb's sneer, or the worldly exquisite's derision.—The potent law of kindness will be more imperative with him than the opinion of the world, and will necessitate him, to do his heavenly Father's will with alacrity and delight. "Ye are my

friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "He that is not with me," that does not by his example corroborate my teachings, "is against me."

In view of this great truth, that the practice of Christ's precepts is equally imperative with belief in his doctrines, what solemn reflections are awakened! What fearful responsibilities are incurred! Well may a man tremble to increase, by the profession of religion, his accountability to his Maker and Judge.—Nay, if a man by his own choice elects the Christian's standard of morals, he cannot complain if the world judges him by that standard; and most assuredly, if he voluntarily assumes the garb of Christianity, he will righteously be held accountable hereafter for every act derogatory to her character, for every failure of duty which may lower her in the estimation of his fellow-men. What tremendous consequences flow from this position! How immeasurably below the number of professing Christians are the examples of Christian life! How little do Christians do in comparison with what they profess! To an observant, candid mind, the idea is positively startling. If professors of religion would calmly sit down and examine *seriatim* their actions for one week, a month, a year, how few could hold themselves guiltless of practically denying the influence, power and spirit of that Christianity in which they profess to believe unto salvation; and many, at the final judgment, will look in vain for those who will testify that they received from their hands even a cup of cold water for discipleship's sake, or were visited by them in prison, affliction of distress, because they were co-followers of the lowly Redeemer.

But practical Christianity has yet another aspect. It authoritatively teaches and requires the purest morality, the highest justice, in all the ordinary business relations of life. A man may not, with impunity in the sight of God, be a professing Christian and lay his religion aside during six days out of seven. They who "know nothing of religion in business," know nothing of it practically elsewhere. Wherever religion exists, it controls. It will stand in abeyance to no other principle. It must be a man's controlling motive, his alpha and omega, his rule of life, his rule of life, or it will forsake him altogether.

This, however, is so obvious that we need not dwell upon it. What, then, is Christianity? Not as professed by too many, but as practised by the sincere self-denying follower of Christ. Truly it is most lovely and of good report. Under the outspreading of its cherubic wings, "justice and mercy meet together—righteousness and peace kiss each other." To verify its doctrines by obeying its precepts should be the Christian's constant aim, and is the surest method of promoting personal happiness, of strengthening and purifying all social obligations and organizations, and of hastening that era of holiest joy which shall yet fill men's hearts and overflow a renewed, redeemed, regenerated world.—*New York Spectator.*

### THE BETTER LAND.

"The shapings of our heavens are the modifications of our constitution," said Charles Lamb, in his reply to Southey's attack upon him in the Quarterly Review.

He who is infinite in love as well as wisdom, has revealed to us the fact of a future life, and the fearfully important relation in which the present stands to it. The actual nature and conditions of that life He has hidden from us—no chart of the ocean of Eternity is given us—no celestial guide-book or geography defines, localizes, and prepares us for the wonders of the world. Hence imagination has a wide field for its speculations which, so long as they do not positively contradict the revelation of the Scriptures, cannot be disproved.

We naturally enough transfer to our idea of Heaven whatever we love and reverence on earth. Thither the Catholic carries, in his fancy, the imposing rites and time-honored solemnities of his worship. There the Methodist sees his love-feasts and camp meetings, in the

groves and by the still waters and green pastures of the Blessed Abodes. The Quaker, in the stillness of his self-communing, remembers that there was "silence in Heaven." The Churchman, listening to the solemn chant of vocal music, or the deep tones of the organ, thinks of the song of the Elders, and the golden harps of the New Jerusalem.

The Heaven of the Northern nations of Europe was a gross and sensual reflection of the earthly life of a barbarous and brutal people. The Indians of North America had a vague notion of a Sunset Land—a beautiful Paradise far in the West—mountains and forests filled with the deer and buffalo—lakes and streams swarming with fishes—the happy hunting-ground of Souls. In a late letter from a devoted missionary among the Western Indians, (Paul Blohm, a converted Jew,) we have noticed a beautiful illustration of this belief.—Near the Omahaw mission-house, on a high bluff, was a solitary Indian grave. "One evening," says the Missionary, "having come home with some cattle, which I had been seeking, I heard some one wailing, and looking in the direction from whence it proceeded, I found it to be from the grave near the house. In a moment after the mourner got up from a kneeling or lying posture, and turning to the setting sun, he stretched forth his arms in prayer and supplication, with an intensity and earnestness as though he would detain the splendid luminary from running his course. With his body leaning forward, and his arms stretched towards the sun, he presented a most striking figure of sorrow and petition. It was solemnly awful. He seemed to me to be one of the ancients, come forth to teach me how to pray."

A venerable and worthy New England clergyman, on his death-bed, just before the close of his life, declared that he was only conscious of an awfully solemn and intense curiosity to know the great secret of Death and Eternity.

The excellent Dr. Nelson, of Missouri, was one who, while on earth, seemed to live another and higher life, in contemplation of Infinite Purity and Happiness. A friend of ours once related an incident concerning him, which made a deep impression upon our mind. They had been travelling through a summer's forenoon, in the prairie, and had lain down to rest beneath a solitary tree. The Doctor lay for a long time, silently looking upward, through the openings of the boughs, into the still heavens, when he repeated the following lines, in a low tone, as if communing with himself in view of the wonders he described:

"Oh! the joys that are there, mortal eye hath not seen!  
Oh, the songs they sing there, with hosannas between!  
Oh, the thrice-blessed song of the Lamb and of Moses!  
Oh, brightness on brightness! the pearl-gate uncloses!  
Oh, white wings of angels! Oh, fields white with roses!  
Oh, white tents of Peace, where the wrapt soul reposes!  
Oh, the waters so still, and the pastures so green!"

The brief hints afforded us by the sacred writings concerning the Better Land, are inspiring and beautiful. Eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the good in store for the righteous. Heaven is described as a quiet habitation—a rest remaining for the people of God. Tears shall be wiped away from all eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. To how many death-beds have these words spoken peace! How many feeling hearts have gathered strength from them to pass through the dark valley of shadows.

Yet we should not forget that "the kingdom of Heaven is within"; that it is the state and affections of the soul; the answer of a good conscience; the sense of harmony with God; a condition of Time as well as of Eternity.—What is really momentous and all-important with us is the Present, by which the Future is shaped and colored. A mere change of locality cannot alter the actual and intrinsic qualities of the soul. Guilt and Remorse would make the golden streets of Paradise intolerable as the burning marl of the infernal abodes, while Purity and Innocence would transform hell itself into Heaven.—*National Era.*

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1848.

POPULAR POWER AND ITS PROPER GUIDANCE.

[A DISCOURSE PREACHED IN THE UNITARIAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY THE 16TH INSTANT.]

"Behold the people shall rise up as a great lion."  
—Numbers xxiii. 24.

It has been said that "the proper study of mankind is man." Undoubtedly this is so; for such a study will lead mankind to a knowledge of themselves, which is to them the most important of all knowledge. To study man in his vast, and complicated, and momentous relations, is a task of surpassing interest. The human being, living and breathing, furnished with a rational soul, invested with tremendous powers for good or evil, willing and acting, now in silence and alone before his God, and now in the busy presence of his fellow-men, shaping his course, forming his character, and diffusing his influence, is an object most worthy of all attention. Viewed in his social capacity—linked with others by the ties of common necessities, hopes, fears, and enjoyments—he presents a spectacle to the contemplative mind, than which nothing can be more imposing and absorbing.

Human society—what a complex and wonderful structure it is! What a variety of elements enter into it! How strange and curious are their action and counter-action! How various the interests involved, and how powerful the passions called into operation! Gradually expanding itself from a simple type, it has now become a most complicated organization. In the patriarchal times, the head of the household was at once the prophet, priest, and king. His family of wives, children, and servants regarded him with veneration. To augment his store, they toiled, and derived pleasure from the increase of his flocks and herds. With a careful and paternal eye he overlooked the whole, and felt a lively interest in the welfare of all. In another stage of society, the distinctive families became merged into tribes, and then again tribes became merged into nations. On the abandonment of the patriarchal state, a way was opened for strife and rivalry for domination. The stronger men gradually rose above the weaker ones, and the strongest man found his way to supreme power. This is the natural order of things. Amongst a rude and barbarous people, where physical force was the highest law, he who possessed the most daring heart and the most stalwart arm, speedily became chief. Amongst a people of more advanced condition, disposed to give some practical respect to moral force, he who was sage in counsel, prompt in action, qualified to controul and direct the body social—he by degrees found his way upward. And all this by virtue of a natural law. For as certainly as the lighter body rises to the surface of the weightier element, so surely will the more forcible men gain an ascendancy over the less forcible.

But the natural order of things was not suffered to take its course. It has always been the mistake of mankind that they interfered too much with this, not only in relation to society, but in almost every other circumstance connected with human life. Even their own bodies they have swathed unnaturally. They have eaten unnatural food, and drunk unnatural drink. In the social institutions which they have formed, they have laboured to construct false foundations for social supremacy. Something else beside inherent forcibleness of character, springing from proper physical, mental, and moral causes—something else beside this has been made the ground and basis of social elevation. A fictitious importance has been given to the accident of birth, to the possession of wealth, and some such things. And the consequence has been, and still is, that multitudes of persons from the mere circumstance of being fortunately born, secure a certain eminence in society, and certain social privileges, who, had they been left to abide the proper result of nature's law, would have silently sunk

into the common crowd of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Whilst, on the other hand, multitudes of other persons, who really possess some force of character, find themselves so hemmed in and cramped by the false arrangements of society, that they can never rise out of the dimness of comparative obscurity.

We do not mean to insinuate here that the proper happiness of the individual depends upon his enjoyment of social eminence and distinction. Far, indeed, from it. We believe there is more real felicity among the humbler classes of society, than among the more exalted. What we mean to assert simply is, that each person will be most happy himself, and most useful to others, in that position to which his natural tendencies direct him, and in which his natural capacities have the freest scope for exercise. The endowments of heaven should be permitted full play without let or hindrance from the false and intricate arrangements of man. To whatever extent the interference of these is sensibly felt, to that extent will discontent be generated, and the seed sown which will one day or other bring forth disastrous fruit.

A great many of the false arrangements which originated in a less advanced condition of society still linger in it, and constitute what might be fitly enough styled a chronic disease of the general body. There are certain great primary wants of nature which must be satisfied else society could not exist for a week. Men must eat and drink, else they could not live, nor sustain any form of social organization.—The first necessities of life, food and clothing, come by the labour of the hands. Somebody, therefore, must work. Then there is a great variety of other conveniences, which habit has converted into necessities, and to procure these requires, likewise, a large amount of attention and labour. In consequence of all this, a large proportion of mankind must still be engaged in actual, and absolutely necessary, work. Then there is still another proportion—a small one to be sure—who do not work and cannot work—weak persons, wanting energy either of mind or body, or both. These are paupers, and are either lodged in workhouses, or permitted to go abroad in idle and miserable freedom.—And there is another proportion still, who do not work either with mind or body—who think themselves privileged at once to idleness and social eminence. All these are pressed together into one vast community, and come into contact at almost every turn. Where there is a great disproportionateness of social privilege and condition without any proper or reasonable ground being evident for it, there can never be entire social security, but rather in most cases where knowledge has made any progress, a vast degree of danger. Men, as soon as they receive any light, will begin to compare the conditions, and question why and wherefore these things should be so. If satisfactory answers cannot be had, the seeds of discontent commence to germinate. If the privileged classes, born to social eminence and superior sway, neglect the dictates of justice, and remain blind to the humanity of the masses—that is if they remain blind to the fact that they are men with human ideas and human feelings—they commit a capital mistake. The prince and the pauper are brothers of a race. As men they are subjects of like passions. Reflect upon the masses of society, then,—consider the human thoughts and passions which lie pent up there, and you will perceive that a tremendous force remains lodged in them. An individual may be powerful, and by virtue of his personal power raise himself to the very summit of the social scale. A class may be powerful, and by virtue of its power exercise a most extensive social influence. But most powerful of all, are the great masses of society. And though their power be not put openly forth, it is latent. It is in them, like the strength of the lion as he slumbers, or lies indolently in his lair. And when touched and aroused by any sense of wrong—real or supposed—they can rise like a lion and put it forth. In such a case, as the text saith, "the people shall rise up as a great lion."

Intelligence of a most remarkable and exciting character has recently reached us from the other side of the Atlantic. Revolutions and rumours of revolutions—evidences of

deep and wide-spread discontent amongst the masses of many of the countries of Europe—tidings of these daily reach us. No thoughtful mind can regard such intelligence otherwise than with deep interest. No religious mind can think lightly of these manifestations of God's providence. They will form an important chapter in the world's history, and this is but the history of the ways of God in relation to the human race. For no event takes place without his knowledge and permission—not even the falling of a sparrow to the ground, or that of a hair from our heads.

One revolution—one thorough revolution—has been effected. One of the leading countries of the civilized world has made its monarch a fugitive. It has entirely remodelled its form of government, and proposes to effect most important alterations in the organization of society. Other nations have manifested a kindred spirit, and seem involved in trouble and tumult. The social and political aspects of many of the European countries are anything but permanent at the present time. Perhaps there never was a period when the symptoms of change were so generally manifest. It forms no part of our design now to offer any opinion on the precise character of those changes which have taken place, or which may yet possibly take place, as the result of the present movements. We propose to direct attention rather to the power, by the instrumentality of which such changes are effected, and to some considerations relative to that power, with respect more particularly to its proper guidance and direction.

It was the people of France who dethroned their King, and sent him to seek an asylum in a foreign land. It is the people of Prussia, and Bavaria, and Austria, and Lombardy, and Sicily, and elsewhere, who occupy a threatening attitude before their rulers, demanding concessions. They have risen "as a great lion," and the princes flee, or quail before their power. The power, then, by which such changes are effected comes from popular opinion and popular energy. It is the power of the people.

Now this is a matter which closely concerns us all. The people we have always with us in every nation, and in every nation they possess the same essential characteristics. In every nation a latent power lies in the masses which may one day burst forth for great good, or for tremendous evil. How shall we avoid the latter result? Only by one method—only by giving the power which lies in the people a wise and enlightened direction. The people must be educated; they must be educated on wise and enlightened principles; they must be taught a knowledge of themselves—of their own nature—of their duties—of their rights and responsibilities as men, as citizens, and as Christians.

We may safely say that it is one of the most hopeful signs of the times, that the importance of educating the people is becoming every day more generally recognized. There was a time, and that not very long ago, when a class of persons—and an influential class, too—had no hesitation in asserting and maintaining that it was dangerous to impart knowledge to the masses. But such a doctrine had its foundation in a false view of self-interest, not in eternal truth, and it could not stand. As the world advances, all men obtain clearer and truer views of things, and it is now seen that the best security for the social fabric is to be found in the enlightenment, not in the ignorance of the people.

The people, we say, should be educated as mental, moral, and religious beings. To commence this aright, we must, in the first place, be thoroughly convinced of the intrinsic worth of human nature. We must be enabled so far to overcome common prejudices as to perceive in the person of the humblest man something of higher consideration than the whole material universe. We must be thoroughly persuaded of the great religious idea that nothing else which the world presents to our view can equal or approach, in value, a human soul. The poorest child that wanders neglected through our streets, though he be sent by starving parents to beg an alms,

or by depraved parents to pick our pockets, has nevertheless an immortal germ within him, which, if wisely and religiously trained, will connect him by an everlasting bond with the truly great, both of heaven and earth, and elevate him to a spiritual union with God himself. If we are possessed of these persuasions of the exalted worth of humanity—of the character of its capacities, and the nature of its destiny—we shall be enabled to commence the work of popular education in the right spirit and at the right place. In the efforts generally made to promote the education of the people, the view taken has not been sufficiently extended—the aim not sufficiently high. Governments in general have provided but poorly for it. Its importance has been recognized, to be sure, and perhaps been loudly talked of; but the place it has occupied on the list of estimates, has always been low enough. Compare the amount of money which has been voted for the maintenance of armies, and navies, and forts, and arsenals, with that which has been given for the education of the people, and you will perceive what a mournful contrast that comparison presents. Men have hitherto sought to rule the world, and control and regulate its destinies by wrong methods, and a most costly and destructive experiment it has been. They have sought to mould its forms, and to shape its courses, by physical force outwardly exercised, instead of by the influence of moral power inwardly nurtured and respected. God never intended that human society, with its vast and varied moral elements, should be shaped into its proper form like a mere material lump, by some outward force or pressure brought upon it. It is not to be pressed into shape like a cheese, nor struck into form in a die, and thrown out perfect like a coin from the mint. No. Human society, like the individual, is destined to grow from within. The rational and moral elements which enter into it are to be gradually developed. These are to be unfolded, as the natural powers of a plant are unfolded, by virtue of an inherent force lodged by God there. Had this been always properly understood, and had the ten thousandth part of the money and exertions been devoted to the peaceful work of educating the great masses of the people, which have been expended on warlike preparations and enterprises, the world would now present an entirely different aspect. Instead of wars and rumours of wars,—instead of revolutions and rumours of revolutions,—placing life and property in jeopardy, the progress of the race would be peaceful and harmonious, tempered and modified at every advancing stage by the happy influences of an increasing Christian love.

To educate the people properly it is not sufficient merely to teach them to read and write and cast up accounts. They should be instructed in a knowledge of their own nature—in a knowledge of outward nature—in a knowledge of God. To know themselves—their character and capacities—the relations in which they stand to every thing else—this is the first, the fundamental knowledge. When all come properly to understand the worth of the individual man, and his natural and inalienable rights, then shall we have those rights respected. To have this accomplished would be a step of very great importance. For let us consider a moment to what distracting consequences a neglect of those rights has led. Some of the most mournful pages of history are those which record the suffering of men on account of their conscientious opinions. Now if men had been properly instructed concerning their own nature they would have known that diversity of opinion was to be expected—that uniformity was not to be looked for in this respect any more than uniformity of countenance. And had they known this they would have been prepared for it, and permitted it to take its course unmolested. Men would not have quarrelled on account of difference of opinion. But each would have allowed the other to enjoy and confess his own, not only without let or hindrance, but with perfect good will.

If men were properly instructed concerning their own capacities for mental and moral



culture and growth—if they knew indeed that an angel's strength and an archangel's glory lay before them, and within their reach, if they only pursued the right way—they would be furnished with a powerful motive to the faithful use of every endowment bestowed by God, and to the highest development of every good element in their nature. If men were properly instructed in the relations in which they stood to all else—to God, and all which God has made—they would be led to a practical perception of their responsibilities, and a more thorough and conscientious fulfilment of their duties as moral and accountable beings.

We have spoken of outward nature, and adverted to the usefulness of a knowledge thereof. In view of temporal advantages merely, this is highly requisite. An acquaintance with nature's wonderful properties and powers augments the conveniences and comforts of a people. We do not require to illustrate this at any length. In a religious point of view, also, an acquaintance with nature is highly useful. Through nature we are led to nature's God. His works and ways proclaim his power, wisdom and goodness. We have spoken also of a knowledge of God. This is the highest, the saving knowledge for man. Any system of education for the people which left this out of view would be radically deficient. A "godless education" is no fit education for a human being. It may be right to state here, however, that in saying this we should be sorry to be considered in any way identified with those who have in recent times employed this phrase as a party watch-word against certain liberal and well intended educational systems. We regard a godless education as essentially defective. Yet we would not mix up the tortuous questions of controverted theology with the instructions which a people are to share in common. We would not introduce sectarian divinity into our popular schools and colleges. We would build up the people together in religious concord. We would not disturb and scatter them by religious discord. In all education reference should be made to God, for all acknowledge a God. There are also certain great leading principles of religion which are universally acknowledged—love to God and love to man—the duty of "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly before God," and that of "doing unto all men as we would that they should do unto us." These, and such as these, should form part of every system of popular education. As to the points in controversy between the different sects—transubstantiation, the Trinity, election, predestination, and the like, we would have these taught at home, or by special teachers for such purposes at other places. We do not deny the right of all parents and all sects to train up their people in what dogmas they judge best, but we would have them do so in a manner not to mar the general harmony. Religion has been already sufficiently degraded by the disputes of religionists; and it is time that all true, and good, and serious men should strive to bring such unseemly disputes to a close.

It is only by the judicious education of a people, we repeat, that their power can be guided in a safe and salutary direction. If this education be neglected, and the people permitted to remain in ignorance, there can be no proper social security. The latent passions and powers lie there like the hidden elements of a volcano, and if any sufficient exciting cause call them into action, they will break forth with a tremendous eruption. The exciting cause may be proper and justifiable, or it may be improper and unjustifiable. It may spring from a disregard of justice on the part of the rulers, pressing the patience of the governed beyond their power of endurance. Or it may spring from the machinations of selfish and designing demagogues who move the passions of the people to serve their own interests. An ignorant people cannot distinguish between the character of these causes; but an educated people can. Hence the security of the latter, and the in-

security of the former. An ignorant people rising up like "a great lion," stirred to madness by a false excitement, will blindly overturn the social fabric, and prostrate it in ruins. But a well informed people rising to make a firm remonstrance and resolute opposition to injustice, will not act blindly but wisely, and will take care to leave the structure of society better and more secure than they found it.

The task of educating the masses of the people is one which lies legitimately at the door of national governments. Yet it should not be held for a moment that we, as individuals, are relieved from all responsibility. Let us in the first place see that we have proper knowledge ourselves. And then we shall find that each of us has a sphere in which he may do his part in educating the people. Let such of us as have families instil salutary views and correct principles there. And let all of us cast carefully around us, and we may discover many opportunities to impart to those who require it sound and saving knowledge. Let us strive to learn ourselves, and to impart to others, true views of human nature and human responsibilities, and of the relation in which men stand to one another, and to God. Above all let us go ourselves to Jesus, and bring others to him, who was at once the Son of God and the Son of Man—the visible image of the everlasting Father, and the perfect pattern for humanity. From his lips, and from his life, may all of us, both young and old, rich and poor, learn the highest, the purest, the divinest knowledge. It is the spirit which comes from Him and from His Gospel, which alone can bring to society full security, and crown it with perfect enjoyment. This binds it together by ties celestial, and renders it safe and lasting as the heavens.

CONTROVERSY AT MEADVILLE, PENN.

Meadville is known to our readers as the seat of a liberal theological school. Attacks have been recently made there upon Unitarian Christianity, and the representations put forth from the Orthodox pulpits have not been of the most scrupulously correct character. Meadville, we perceive, fares no better than other places in this respect. A Rev. Mr. Kingsley, it would appear, has made himself quite prominent in this warfare. His activity has aroused that of our friend Mr. Hassall, formerly a Methodist Minister in this city, but now a student at the Meadville School. He has propounded eighteen questions to the Rev. Mr. K., which we subjoin. It will be seen that they are of rather a puzzling nature. Verily it would be difficult to give a satisfactory reply to them. Mr. K. declined to answer them because "the individual whose signature they bore was a stranger to him." Most persons will think it probable that he also had some other and stronger reasons.

- I. Did not you, in one of your present course of Lectures, declare that the Unitarians did not believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures?
- II. Do all Trinitarian commentators believe in the plenary inspiration of every book, chapter, verse and phrase of the common version of the Scriptures?
- III. Does Luther, Calvin, Clark, Griesbach, Wesley or Arch-Bishop Whately believe in the plenary inspiration of every book, chapter, verse and phrase of the common version of the Scriptures?
- IV. Do you believe in the plenary inspiration of every book, chapter, verse and phrase of the common Scriptures?
- V. Does Calvin believe in the plenary inspiration, or even in the genuineness of the 2nd Epistle of Peter? Does he believe that the epistle to the Hebrews was written by Paul?
- VI. Does Luther believe in the plenary inspiration, or even genuineness, of the epistle of James?
- VII. Do not Wesley and Dr. Adam Clark reject portions of the common version?
- VIII. When Channing says, page 80, vol. III, as quoted by you, "These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify and restrain, and turn from their obvious sense," etc., does not the term "we" evidently include all christians, and does he not by the expression "later passages" refer to a class of passages which Trinitarians interpret as he does?
- IX. When Trinitarians read these passages "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you." "But

to us there is but one God, the Father." "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know ALL THINGS." Do they, in interpreting them, take their literal meaning, or do they not "modify and restrain and turn them from their obvious sense?"

X. When Christ says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," is it not the literal and obvious sense that the Son is not omniscient? and do not you, and Trinitarians generally in interpreting this passage, "modify and restrain and turn it from its obvious sense?"

XI. Do you know of an Unitarian church in the United States where the "Improved Version" referred to by you, is used?

XII. Do not the Unitarians assert that there is no Unitarian congregation in the United States which uses the "Improved Version?" and do they not deny that it is of authority in the denomination?

XIII. Does not Rev. John Wesley, when writing on the Calvinistic view of Predestination, say to the Calvinistic view: "Then you have either found a new God or made one! This is not the God of the Christians. Our God is just in all his ways, he reprobeth not where he hath not strewed?"

XIV. Does not Mr. Wesley again say when writing on the same subject,—referring to the Calvinists, "And thus by these men's account, our Lord lost his labor of Love, and accomplished a SOLEMN NOTHING?"

XV. Does not Mr. Wesley also say that "If Christ died not for all, then those who obey Christ, by going and preaching the gospel to every creature, as glad tidings of grace and peace, of great joy to all people, do sin thereby, in that they go to most people with a lie in their mouth?"

XVI. When Dr. Channing says "that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for him a being whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could," is it not plain from what follows, as well as from what precedes, that he is referring to the same system of religion which Wesley says has "found or made a new God" a God which is "not the God of the Christians?"

XVII. Does not Mr. Wesley say that "the doctrine of absolute predestination naturally leads to the chambers of death?"

XVIII. Is it proper for a person holding the views of Wesley to fellowship with Calvinists?  
R. HASSALL.

WAR.

A pamphlet entitled "Considerations Respecting the Lawfulness of War under the Gospel Dispensation," has just reached us through the Post-office. We do not know by whom it was sent, but it was highly acceptable. It was issued, as the subscription indicates, by the Society of Friends, at their last yearly meeting in New York city, and bears the signature of their clerk. We wish that every body of Christians would make it a rule to utter their annual testimony against a practice so palpably abhorrent to the plainest principles of the Gospel.

With reference to the alleged unavoidable necessity of war, and the attempted justification of it from the Old Testament history, the pamphlet contains the following paragraphs:

"It is indeed to be regretted, that no instance of strictly national character has yet occurred, to test the practicability of the principle for which we plead,—an unreasoning reliance upon the Omnipotent Arm for protection and defence.—There is, however, a case to which we may refer, of a strong character, and sufficiently national for all the purposes of our argument. Pennsylvania, it is known, was settled by men who believed that Christianity forbade war under any and every pretext. They acted in strict accordance with this belief. They planted themselves in the midst of savages. They were surrounded by men who knew nothing of written treaties, or the obligations of revealed religion; by men who were addicted to war in its most sanguinary and revolting forms;—and yet, for more than seventy years, and up to the time that the government of the Colony passed into other hands, they enjoyed uninterrupted peace.

"The Pennsylvanians," says Clarkson, "became armed, though without arms; they became strong, though without strength; they became safe, without the ordinary means of safety. For the greater part of a century, and never, during the administration of William Penn, or that of his proper successors, was there a quarrel or a war."—Whatever the quarrels of the Pennsylvania Indians were with others, they uniformly respected and held sacred, as it were, the territories of William Penn.

"The settlers of Pennsylvania, relying upon Divine protection, placed themselves in the midst of savages, without the means of resisting aggression; and even savage magnanimity felt the appeal,—suppressed the war-cry—and permitted them to possess the land in undisturbed repose. What a lesson, may we not ask, to Christian nations!"

"How painfully, how instructively, does the situation of other American colonies contrast with this! We will not attempt to portray it; but refer to the blood-stained pages of colonial history.

cerity and truth, towards nations professing the benign religion of the Gospel, would be more dangerous, or less successful? We trust not—such a conclusion would be a libel upon mankind—a denial of the efficacy of the Christian religion—and an inexcusable distrust of the Providence and moral government of God.

"It is not unusual to attempt a justification of war under the Gospel dispensation, by referring to the wars of the Jews, under the dispensation of the Law. It is conceded that many of these wars were authorised by the Supreme Ruler of the universe, for purposes of his own inscrutable wisdom; but this high authority cannot be claimed by Christian nations; and it has been shown that the two dispensations are essentially different—that holy men during the continuance of the legal dispensation, predicted, under the influence of the spirit of prophecy, that the time would come when nation should cease to lift up sword against nation, or to learn war any more. We have seen that the Divine Author and Founder of the existing dispensation, called the attention of his followers to those violent and vindictive passions, the indulgence of which were allowed under the Law, for the express purpose of excluding them from the code of morals which it was His purpose to establish; and that His immediate followers, and their successors for nearly two centuries, firmly believed that war was forbidden by their Divine Master. We have shown that the conviction was so solemnly sealed upon their consciences, that when called by the rulers of that day to serve as soldiers, no earthly consideration or suffering could induce them to swerve from this article of primitive Christian faith.

We would further quote the concluding reflection:—

"In conclusion, we would ask attention to one view of the subject of war, which commends itself with awful solemnity to the consideration of all, and with peculiar force to those we are now addressing. We refer to the ultimate—to the unseen consequences of war—to the final state of the myriads of spirits, disembodied, it is greatly to be feared, while under the influence of the most ferocious passions, and sent uncalled, into the world of righteous retribution.

"The reflection is awful indeed—and must, we would fain hope, command the most serious attention;—and by producing a firm conviction of the utter incompatibility of war with the meek, forgiving, and peaceable spirit of the Gospel, lead to increased and earnest efforts to eradicate from the earth this scourge to the family of man.

"If, then, the fruits of war be anguish unpeakable, and bitterness in the latter end—how strong—how powerful is the claim upon our efforts to oppose it, and restore the Church to the state of purity in which it stood in the primitive period of its existence!

"May the Lord in his mercy hasten the day this shall be effected;—when nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation, and the people shall learn war no more; but the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ."

BOOKS FOR SALE,  
AT  
C. BRYSON'S BOOK-STORE,  
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER STREET.

- THE Entire Works of WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D.; in two volumes.
- The Entire Works of the Rev. ORVILLE DEWEY, D.D., Pastor of the Church of the Messiah, New York, one volume, 8vo. pp. 887.
- A COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS. By the Rev. A. A. Livermore.
- THE ESSENTIAL FAITH OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, Deduced from the Sacred Records. By Harriet Martineau.
- LA FOI DE L'EGLISE UNIVERSELLE; D'APRES LES SAINTES ECRITURES. Par Dlle. Martineau. Traduit de l'Anglais.
- SCRIPTURE PROOFS AND SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF UNITARIANISM. By John Wilson. 3rd Edition, revised and enlarged.
- A COLLECTION OF PSALMS AND HYMNS for Christian Worship. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D. D.
- PRAYERS for the use of Christian Families. With a Preface recommending the Practice of Family Worship. By the Rev. J. Scott Porter.
- LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By the Rev. A. Peabody, Pastor of the South Congregational Church, Portsmouth, N. H.
- THE APOLOGY OF THE REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSAY, M. A., on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire.
- THE REMONSTRANCE OF A UNITARIAN. Addressed to the Right Rev. Thomas Burgess, D.D., Lord Bishop of St. Davids. By Capt. James Gifford, R. N.
- LETTERS ADDRESSED TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, chiefly in Reply to Arguments in Support of the Doctrine of the Trinity. By Mary S. B. Dana, author of the "Southern and Northern Harps," "The Parted Family," &c.
- THE RECOLLECTIONS OF JOTHAM ANDERSON. By the late Rev. H. Ware, Jr., of Cambridge University, New England.
- SERMONS. By the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D., Minister of King's Chapel, Boston. In two volumes.

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

LETTER II.

The first point of view in which I have invited you to consider the Bible is in the light of *Divine Revelation*. And what are we to understand by these terms? I intend, as much as possible, to avoid the field of controversy, which I am not well acquainted with, and for which I have little respect, and still less inclination. My idea of the Bible as a *Divine Revelation* is founded upon its practical use to mankind, and not upon metaphysical subtleties. There are three points of doctrine, the belief of which forms the foundation of all morality. The first is, the existence of a God; the second is the immortality of the soul; and the third is, a future state of rewards and punishments.

Suppose it possible for a man to disbelieve either of these three articles of faith, and that man will have no conscience, he will have no other law than that of the tiger or the shark; the laws of man may bind him in chains, or may put him to death, but they never can make him wise, virtuous or happy. It is possible to believe them all without believing that the Bible is a Divine revelation. It is so obvious to every reasonable being that he did not make himself, and the world which he inhabits could as little make itself, that the moment we begin to exercise the power of reflection, it seems impossible to escape the conviction that there is a Creator.

It is equally evident that the Creator must be a spiritual and not a material being; there is also a consciousness that the thinking part of our nature is not material, but spiritual—that it is not subject to the laws of matter, nor perishable with it. Hence arises the belief that we have an immortal soul; and pursuing the train of thought which the visible creation and observation upon ourselves suggests, we must soon discover that the Creator must also be the Governor of the universe; that His wisdom and His goodness must be without bounds; that He is a righteous God and loves righteousness; that mankind are bound by the laws of righteousness and are accountable to Him for their obedience to them in this life, according to their good or evil deeds.

This completion of divine justice must be reserved for another life. The existence of a Creator, the immortality of the human soul, and a future state of retribution, are therefore so perfectly congenial to natural reason when once discovered—or rather it is so impossible for human reason to disbelieve them—that it would seem the light of natural reason alone could suffice for their discovery; but the conclusion would not be correct. Human reason may be sufficient to get an obscure glimpse of these secret and important truths, but it cannot discover them in all their clearness. For example—in all their numberless false religions which have swayed the minds of men in different ages and regions of the world, the idea of a God has always been included:—

“Father of all! in every age,  
In every clime adored—  
By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage—  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.”

So says Pope's universal prayer. But it is the God of the Hebrews alone who is announced to us as the Creator of the world. The ideas of God entertained by all the most illustrious and most ingenious nations of antiquity were weak and absurd. The Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians believed in an innumerable multitude of gods, and worshipped not only oxen, crocodiles, dogs and cats, but even garlies and onions. The Greeks invented a poetical religion, and adored men and women, virtues and vices, air, water and fire, and everything that a vivid imagination could personify.

Almost all the Greek philosophers reasoned and meditated upon the nature of the gods; but scarcely any of them reflected enough even to imagine that there was but one God, and not one of them ever conceived of Him as the Creator of the world. Cicero has collected together all their opinions upon the nature of the gods, and pronounced them more like the dreams of madmen than the sober judgment of wise men. In the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, there is an account of the change of Chaos in the world. Before the sea and the earth, and the sky that surrounds all things, (says Ovid), there was a thing called Chaos, and some of the gods (he does not know which) separated from each other the elements of this Chaos, and turned them into the world; thus far and no further could human reason extend. But the first words of the Bible are—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The blessed and sublime idea of God, as the Creator of the universe, the source of all human happiness for which all the sages and philosophers of Greece and Rome groped in darkness and never found, is recalled in the

first verse of the Book of Genesis. I call it the source of all human virtue and happiness; because when we have attained the conception of a Being, who by the mere act of His will, created the world, it would follow as an irresistible consequence,—even if we were not told that the same Being must also be the Governor of His own creation—that man, with all other things, was also created by Him, and must hold his felicity and virtue on the condition of obedience to His will. In the first chapters of the Bible there is a short and rapid historical narrative of the manner in which the world and man were made—of the condition upon which happiness and immortality was bestowed upon our first parents—of their transgression of this condition—of the punishment denounced upon them—and the promise of redemption from it by the “seed of the woman.”

There are, and always have been, where the Holy Scriptures have been known, petty wittlings, and self-conceited reasoners, who cavil at some of the particular details of this narration. Even serious enquirers after truth have sometimes been perplexed to believe that there should have been evening and morning before the existence of the sun—that man should be made of clay, and woman from the ribs of man—that they should have been forbidden to eat an apple, and for disobedience to that injunction, be with all their posterity doomed to death, and that eating an apple could give “the knowledge of good and evil.”—that a serpent should speak and beguile a woman. All this is undoubtedly marvellous, and above our comprehension. Much of it is clearly figurative and allegorical; nor is it easy to distinguish what part of it is to be understood in a literal and not in a symbolical sense. But all that it imports us to know or understand is plain; the great and essential principles, upon which our duties and enjoyments depend, are involved in no obscurity. A God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, is revealed in all his majesty and power; the terms upon which he gave existence and happiness to the common parents of mankind are exposed to us in the clearest way.

Disobedience to the will of God, was the offence for which he was precipitated from paradise; obedience to God is the merit by which paradise is to be regained. Here, then, is the foundation of all morality,—the source of all our obligations, as accountable creatures. This idea of the transcendent power of the Supreme Being is essentially connected with that by which the whole duty of man is summed up; obedience to His will. I have observed that natural reason might suffice for an obscure perception, but not for the clear discovery of these truths. Even Cicero could start to his own mind the question: Whether justice could exist upon earth unless founded upon piety? but could not settle it to his own satisfaction. The ray of divine light contained in the principle, that justice has no other foundation than piety, could make its way to the soul of the heathen, but there it was extinguished in the low, unsettled and inconsistent notions which were the only foundations of his piety. How could his piety be pure or sound when he did not know whether there was one God or a thousand,—whether he or they had or had not any concern in the formation of the world, and whether they had any regard to the affairs or the conduct of mankind?

Once assume the idea of a single God the Creator of all things, whose will is the law of moral obligation to man, and to whom man is accountable, and piety becomes as rational as it is essential; it becomes the first of human duties; and not a doubt can thenceforth remain, that fidelity in the association of human piety and that most excellent virtue, Justice, repose upon no other foundation. At a later age than Cicero, Longinus expressly quotes the 3rd verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis as an example of the sublime. “God said let there be light, and there was light; and wherein consists its sublimity? In the image of the transcendent power presented to the mind, with the most striking simplicity of expression. Yet this verse only exhibits the effects of that transcendent power which the first verse discloses in announcing God as the Creator of the world. The true subject is in the idea given us of God. To such a God the heart of man must yield with cheerfulness the tribute of homage which it never could pay to the numerous gods of Egypt, to the dissolute debauchees of the heathen mythology, nor even to the more elevated, but not less fantastical imaginations of the Grecian philosophers and sages.

From your affectionate Father,  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

LETTER II.

The second general point of view, in which I propose for you to consider the Bible, to the end that it may “thoroughly furnish you unto all good works,” is in the historical character.

To a man of liberal education, the study of history is not only useful, and important, but

altogether indispensable, and with regard to the history contained in the Bible, the observation which Cicero makes respecting that of his own country is much more emphatically applicable, “that it is not so much praiseworthy to be acquainted with as it is shameful to be ignorant of it.” History, so far as it relates to the actions and adventures of men, may be divided in five different classes. First, the history of the world, otherwise called universal history; Second, that of particular nations; Third, that of particular institutions; Fourth, that of single families; and Fifth, that of individual men. The last two of these classes are generally distinguished by the name of memoirs and biography.

All these classes of history are to be found in the Bible, and it may be worth your while to discriminate them one from another. The universal history is short, and all contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, together with the first chapter of the first book of Chronicles, which is little more than a genealogical list of names; but it is of great importance, not only as it includes the history of the creation, of the fall of man, of the antediluvian world and the flood by which the whole human race, (excepting Noah and his family,) were destroyed, but as it gives a very precise account of the time from the creation until the birth of Abraham. This is the foundation of the ancient history, and in reading profane historians hereafter, I would advise you always to reflect upon their narratives with reference to it with respect to the chronology. A correct idea of this is so necessary to understand all history, ancient and modern, that I may hereafter write you something farther concerning it; for the present I shall only recommend to your particular attention the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis and request you to cast up and write me the amount of the age of the world when Abraham was born.

The remainder of the book of Genesis, beginning at the 12th chapter, is a history of one individual (Abraham) and his family, during three generations of his descendants, after which the book of Exodus commences with the history of the same family, multiplied into a nation: this national and family history is continued through the books of the Old Testament until that of Job, which is of a peculiar character, differing in many particulars from every other part of the Scriptures. There is no other history extant which can give so interesting and correct view of the rise and progress of human associations as this account of Abraham and his descendants, through all the vicissitudes to which individuals, families and nations are liable. There is no other history where the origin of a whole nation is traced up to a single man, and where a connected train of events and a regular series of persons from generation to generation is preserved. As the history of a family, it is intimately connected with our religious principles and opinions, for it is the family from which (in his human character) Jesus Christ descended. It begins by relating the commands of God to Abraham to abandon his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and go to a land which He would show him. This command was accompanied by two promises, from which, and from their fulfilment, arose the differences which I have just noticed between the history of the Jews and that of every other nation.

The first of these promises was “That God would make Abraham a great nation, and bless him;” the second, and incomparably the most important one was, that “in him all the families of the earth should be blessed.” This promise was made about two thousand years before the birth of Christ, and in Him had its fulfilment. When Abraham, in obedience to the command of God, had gone into the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared unto him and made him a third promise, that he should give that land to a nation which should descend from him, as a possession; this was fulfilled between five and six hundred years afterward. In reading all the historical books of both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the books of the Prophets, you should always bear in mind the reference which they have to these three promises of God to Abraham. All the history is no more than a narrative of the particular manner, and the detail of events by which those promises were fulfilled.

In the account of the creation, and the fall of man, I have already remarked that the moral doctrine inculcated by the Bible is, that the great consummation of all human virtue consists in obedience to the will of God. When we come hereafter to speak of the Bible in its ethical character, I shall endeavour to show you the intrinsic excellence of this principle; but I shall now only remark how strongly the principle itself is illustrated, first in the account of the fall, and next by the history of Abraham. In the account of the creation we are informed that God, after having made the world, created the first human pair, and “gave them do-

minion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” He gave them also “every herb bearing seed, and the fruit of every tree for meat;” all this we are told “God saw was very good.”

Thus the immediate possession of everything was given them, and its perpetual enjoyment secured to their descendants, on condition of abstaining from the “fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” It is altogether immaterial to my present remarks whether the narrative is to be understood in a literal or allegorical sense, as not only the knowledge; but the possession of created good was granted; the fruit of the tree, could confer upon them no knowledge but that of evil, and the command was nothing more than to abstain from that knowledge—to forbear from rushing upon their own destruction.

It is not sufficient to say that this was a command in its own nature light and easy; it was a command to pursue the only law of their nature, to keep the happiness that had been heaped upon them without measure; but observe—it contained the principle of obedience—it was assigned to them as a duty—and the heaviest of penalties was denounced upon its transgression. They were not to discuss the wisdom or justice of this command; they were not to inquire why it had been enforced upon them, nor could they have the slightest possible motive for the inquiry; unqualified felicity and immortality were already theirs; wretchedness and death were alone forbidden them, but placed within their reach as merely trials of their obedience. They violated the law; they forfeited their joy and immortality; they “brought into the world, death and all our woe.”

Here, then, is an extreme case in which the mere principle of obedience could be tried—a command to abstain from that from which every motive of reason and interest would have deterred had the command never been given—a command given in the easiest of all possible forms, requiring not so much as an action of any kind, but merely forbearance; and its transgression was so severely punished, the only inference we can draw from it is that the most aggravated of all crimes, and that which includes in itself all others, is disobedience to the will of God. Let us now consider how the principle of obedience is inculcated in the history of Abraham, by a case in the opposite extreme. God commanded Abraham to abandon forever his country, his kindred and his father's house, to go, he knew not where; promising as a reward of his obedience, to bless him and his posterity, though he was then childless; he was required to renounce everything that could most contribute to the happiness and comfort of his life, and which was in his actual enjoyment; to become a houseless, friendless wanderer upon the earth, on the mere faith of the promise that a land should be shown him which his descendants should possess—that they should be a great nation—and that through them all mankind should receive in future ages a blessing.

The obedience required of Adam, was merely to retain all the blessings he enjoyed; the obedience of Abraham was to sacrifice all that he possessed for the vague and distant prospect of a future compensation to his posterity; the self-control and self-denial required of Adam, were in themselves the slightest that imagination can conceive,—but its failure was punished by the forfeiture of all his enjoyments; the self-dominion to be exercised by Abraham was of the most severe and painful kind—but its accomplishment will ultimately be rewarded by the restoration of all that was forfeited by Adam.

This restoration, however, was to be obtained by no ordinary proof of obedience; the sacrifice of mere personal blessings, however great, could not lay the foundation for the redemption of mankind from death; the voluntary submission of Jesus Christ to his own death, in the most excruciating and ignominious form, was to consummate the great plan of redemption, but the submission of Abraham to sacrifice his beloved and only son Isaac—the child promised by God himself, and through whom all the greater promises were to be carried into effect, the feelings of nature, the parent's bowels, were all required to be sacrificed by Abraham to the blind, unquestioning principle of obedience to the will of God. The blood of Isaac was not indeed shed—the butchery of an only son by the hand of his father, was a sacrifice which a merciful God did not require to be completely executed; but as an instance of obedience it was imposed upon Abraham, and nothing less than the voice of an angel from Heaven could arrest his uplifted arm, and withhold him from sheathing his knife in the heart of his child. It was upon this testimonial of obedience that God's promise of redemption was expressly renewed to Abraham. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.” Gen. xxii. 18.

From your affectionate Father,  
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.