

THE

LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

VOL. I.

MARCH, 1854.

No. 3.

THE LABORS OF ORIGEN.

MOST of our readers will have heard or read of Origen. He was born in Alexandria, A.D. 185. His father, Leonidas died a martyr, and he was thus left early to his own resources. In his early manhood he gained a subsistence in Alexandria, by giving instruction in Greek philology and literature, and was subsequently ordained a presbyter at Cæserea. With strong religious and philosophic tendencies in his nature, and an industry which knew not weariness, he became one of the most copious and eminent of the early Christian writers. Neander styles him the creator of sacred literature among the Christians. From the pages of this historian we here abridge some account of his literary labors.*

Origen had a friend called Ambrosius, whom he used to call his *work-driver*. He not only excited him by his questions and challenges to many inquiries, but also employed his great wealth in providing him with the means

* For the account in full, see Ch. Hist., Vol. I, *Torrey's Translation*.

of pursuing expensive investigations; such, for instance, as made indispensable the purchase and collation of manuscripts. He furnished him with seven ready scribes, who were to relieve each other as his amanuenses, besides others to transcribe everything in a fair copy. Origen says of this friend, in one of his letters, "He who gave me credit for great diligence, and a great thirst after the divine word, has, by his own diligence and his own love of sacred science, convinced himself how much he was mistaken. He has so far outdone me, that I am in danger of not coming up to his requisitions. The collation of manuscripts leaves me no time to eat; and after meals I can neither go out nor enjoy a season of rest; but even at those times I am compelled to continue my philological investigations, and the correction of manuscripts. Even the night is not granted me for repose, but a great part of it is claimed for these philological inquiries. I will not mention the time from early in the morning till the ninth and sometimes the tenth hour of the day;* for all who take pleasure in such labors, employ those hours in the study of the divine word, and in reading."

He completed at Alexandria his commentaries on Genesis, the Psalms, the Lamentation of Jeremiah, (of which writings some fragments only remain) his five first *Tomes* on the gospel of John, his tract on the resurrection, his *Stromata*, and his work concerning principles. The work last mentioned derived great importance from the struggle which it called forth between opposite tendencies of the theological mind, and from the influence which it had on the fortunes of Origen and of his school. Platonic philosophy and doctrines of the Christian faith were then, still

* Till three or four o'clock, P.M., according to our reckoning.

more than at a later period, blended together in his mind. His wildness of speculation became afterwards moderated by the influence of the Christian spirit. Many ideas which he had thrown out in this work (rather as problems, however, than as decisions,) he afterwards retracted; although the principles of his system always remained the same. He declared himself, in a letter subsequently written to Fabian, bishop of Rome, before whom his doctrines had probably been accused as heretical, that he had set forth many things in that book which he no longer acknowledged as true, and that his friend Ambrosius had published it against his will.

The growing reputation of Origen excited the jealousy of his bishop, and involved him in a conflict with the church zealots of his time. He was forbidden to exercise the office of teacher in the Alexandrian Church, and his doctrines were stigmatised as heretical. Yet from the resources of his own inner life he drew sufficient peace of mind to complete his fifth *Tome* on the gospel of John, amid the storms at Alexandria (since, as he says, Jesus commanded the winds and the waves of the sea;) when he finally concluded to leave that city, and to take refuge with his friends at Cæsarea in Palestine. But the persecutions of Demetrius followed him even there. The bishop now seized on a pretext, which would enable him easily to find allies in Egypt and out of Egypt; inasmuch as the prevailing dogmatic spirit, in many parts of the church, was violently opposed to the *idealistic* tendency of Origen's school, and inasmuch as the work *περὶ ἀρχῶν* would furnish such abundant materials for the charge of heresy. At a more numerous synod of Egyptian bishops, Demetrius excluded Origen, as a heretic, from the communion of the

church ; and the synod issued against him a violent invective. To this document Origen alludes, when, in commencing once more at Cæsarea the continuation of his commentary on the gospel of John, he says, " That God who once led his people out of Egypt, had also delivered him from that land ; but his enemy, in this recent letter truly at variance with the spirit of the gospel, had assailed him with the utmost virulence, and roused against him all the winds of malice in Egypt."

This personal quarrel became now a conflict between the opposite doctrinal parties. The churches in Palestine, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Achaia, took the side of Origen ; the church of Rome declared against him. How Origen judged of those who stigmatized him as a heretic, appears from a remark, which he makes after citing 1 Cor. 1, 25 : " If *I* had said," he observes, " the foolishness of God, how would the lovers of censure accuse me ! How should I be accused by them, even though I had said a thousand times what they themselves hold to be true, yet had not rightly said this single thing, — how should I be accused by them for saying, ' the foolishness of God ' !" In his letter of vindication against the synod which had excommunicated him, he quotes some of the denunciations of the prophets against wicked priests and potentates, and then adds : " But we should far rather pity than hate them, far rather pray for them than curse them : for we are made to bless, and not to curse."

The efforts of Origen's enemies only contributed to extend the sphere of his activity. His removal to Palestine was certainly important in its consequences, an opportunity being thus given him of laboring also from that point, for the diffusion of a liberal scientific spirit in the church ;

and long were the traces of his activity to be discerned in these districts. Here, too, a circle of young men gathered around him, who were trained under his influence to fill the posts of theologians and church teachers. Here Origen prosecuted his literary undertakings. Here he composed, among other works, the treatise, already noticed, on the Utility of Prayer, and on the Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which he addressed to his friend Ambrosius. Here he maintained an active correspondence with the most distinguished church-teachers in Cappadocia; Palestine and Arabia; and he was often invited to assist at deliberations on the concerns of foreign churches.

During the persecution of Maximin the Thracian, in which two of Origen's friends, the presbyter Protocetus of Cæsarea, and Ambrosius, had much to suffer, he addressed to these confessors, who were awaiting in prison the issue of their trials, his treatise *on Martyrdom*. He exhorts them to steadfastness in confession; he fortifies their resolution by the promises of scripture, and takes pains to refute those sophisms which might be employed to palliate the denial of a faith grounded in facts; as, for example, when Gnostics, who held outward things to be of no importance, and pagan statesmen, who were wont to regard everything solely from the political point of view, sought alike to persuade the Christians, that, without violating their private convictions, which no one wished to deprive them of, they might join in those merely outward ceremonies of the state religion.

During one of the heathen persecutions, Origen was secreted in the house of Juliana, a Christian virgin, for two years. And here he made a discovery which had an im-

portant bearing on his literary undertakings. He had been employed for years on a work which was to contribute both to the emendation of the text of the Alexandrian version of the Old Testament—which was the translation chiefly used in the church, being regarded by many Christians, who followed the old Jewish legend, as inspired, and of which the different manuscripts varied considerably from each other in their readings,—and also to the improvement of this translation itself, by comparing it with other ancient versions, and with the original Hebrew text. Origen, who was in the constant habit of disputing with Pagans and Jews on religious matters, had found, as he says himself, by his own experience, how necessary was an acquaintance with the original text of the Old Testament, to avoid laying one's-self open to the Jews, who ridiculed the ignorance of those Gentile Christians that disputed with them, when they cited passages from the Alexandrian version which were not to be found in the Hebrew, or when they showed that they knew nothing of passages which were to be found in the Hebrew only. He had therefore employed the wealth of his friend Ambrosius, and availed himself of his own frequent journeys, to collect various manuscripts of the Alexandrian version, and other ancient translations, which it was still possible to procure. Thus he had, for example, in ransacking every corner, found, in a cask at Jericho, an ancient translation, not before known to exist, of some books of the Old Testament. It now fell out, that this Juliana had become heiress to the writings of the Ebionite *Symmachus*, who had lived perhaps in the beginning of this century; and among these writings Origen found both his commentary on the gospel according to the Hebrews, and his version

of the Old Testament. He was now enabled to bring to a completion the great work of collating the ancient versions still extant, and of comparing them with the Hebrew text.

After the assassination of Maximin, and under the reign of the emperor Gordian, in the year 238, Origen was enabled to return once more to Cæsarea, and resume there his earlier labors.

To the end of his life he was occupied with theological labors. Under the reign of Philip the Arabian, with whose family he was on terms of correspondence, he wrote the work against Celsus, his commentary on the gospel of Matthew, and other treatises. When he was sixty years of age, he now for the first time permitted his discourses to be taken down by short-hand writers. In what high consideration he stood with the churches of these countries, is evident from the fact, that on important ecclesiastical questions, whereit was difficult to come at a decision, the opinion of Origen was consulted by synods of bishops. We may here mention as an instance of this kind, that a controversy had been excited by a party among the Arabian Christians, who asserted, that the human soul died with the body, and that it was to be revived only with the body at the resurrection,—an ancient Jewish notion. Perhaps, too, in these districts, whose situation brought them into frequent contact with Jews, it was no new doctrine; but the one which had prevailed there from ancient times; and perhaps it was first brought about through the influence of Origen,—in whose system the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, which is related to God, held an important place,—that this lat'er doctrine now became here the more general one, and the

small party who still adhered to the old opinion, appeared to be heretical ; if the case really was, that the prevailing voice had expressed itself thus early against them. Hence it is explained how the convention of a *great synod* came to be thought necessary for the purpose of settling these disputes. As they could not come to an agreement, Origen was sent for ; and it was brought about by his influence, that the opponents of the soul's natural immortality confessed and renounced their error.

Origen, who, on account of some particular opinions, was by a great part of the church stigmatized as a heretic and enemy to the evangelical scheme of faith, is said in the last days of a life consecrated to labor and conflict in behalf of that which he considered to be the cause of Christ, to have refuted by his conduct the accusations of his adversaries, and shown how he was ready to sacrifice all for the faith,— how he belonged to that number who are willing to hate even their own life for the Lord's sake.

As the fury of the enemies of Christianity, in the Decian persecution, was directed particularly against *those* men who were distinguished among the Christians for their station, their wealth, or their knowledge, and their activity in promulgating the faith, it was natural that such a man as Origen should become a shining mark for fanatical cruelty. After a steadfast confession, he was thrown into prison, and here it was attempted, in conformity with the plan of the Decian persecution, to overcome the infirmity of age, by exquisite and gradually increasing tortures. But the faith which he bore at heart, sustained the weakness of old age, and gave him power to withstand every trial. After having suffered so much, he wrote from his prison a letter full of consolation, of en-

couragement for others. The circumstances which contributed first to moderate, and then to bring wholly to an end, this persecution, procured finally for Origen also freedom and repose. Yet the sufferings which he had undergone, served perhaps to hasten his death, which took place about the year 254, in the seventieth year of his age.

THE BIBLE :

ITS NATURE, AND USE AMONG CHRISTIANS.

ANONYMOUS.

THE Bible means *the Book* ; or as we might say in order to shew more clearly its eminence over all other works, it is *the Book of Books*. To the Jews the Old Testament was the whole of their literature. It contains all that was extant, about 200 years before the birth of our Saviour, of all that had been written in the Hebrew tongue — along with a part of Daniel and a few chapters in Ezra and Jeremiah, which were written in Chaldee. The latest writer among them lived at least 400 years before the Christian *Æra*. The Apocryphal writings were not so much esteemed by the Jews, as they are of a much later date, and not written in their primitive tongue — some being in Chaldee, and the rest in Greek.

The Old Testament accordingly was called by the Jews simply writings — containing as it does their whole literature, both prose and poetry ; their geography and history, and whatever science they possessed ; their religious, pas-

toral, and warlike poetry ; their orations and noble exhortations ; their maxims of wisdom and their lessons of love.

A corresponding term has been employed by Christians, since the days of Chrysostom (one of the earliest and best of the ancient fathers) to denote those writings which have authority among them and which are used in their places of public worship. The Bible means, in this sense, the Christian's book, by way of eminence. It was so *in an emphatic sense*, when few other works were known ; it is so now ; and such it must ever continue to be, containing as it does the most *ancient, remarkable and important* writings that have ever been penned.

The New Testament contains the records of our Saviour's life ; the travels of the Apostles after his death, to proclaim the glad tidings they had heard from their master's lips ; the several epistles that were written by them to the early communities, formed in consequence of their missionary labors ; besides a vision which appeared to a disciple named John, obscurely revealing the destiny of some of the earliest churches.

The canon of the New Testament originally meant the *RULE of faith* to those who received the Gospel ; but since that time, the term has been used to denote a list of those books which were decided by the early Christians to be authentic—written by Apostles or by their contemporaries, and fit to be read in the churches. By Eusebius, a learned teacher who lived about 300 A.D., and the writer of a church history, all the writings existing in his time respecting our Saviour, and the teachings of his Apostles, were divided into three classes. 1. Those which were genuine, apostolical, and belonging to the New Testament. All these we still possess. 2. Those which were not uni-

versally allowed to be genuine, though used in the churches and esteemed by many. Among these he names five, which he places first; they are retained in *our* canon (though two or three of them are as doubtful now as they were then), viz., the Epistles of James and Jude, the 2nd of Peter; and the 2nd and 3rd of John. The other names by him in this class have been since rejected as spurious, in consequence of further examination. 3. In the third class, he mentioned many that are still partially known to us, which were considered then, as they are now, to be absurd or irreligious writings, invented by enemies to Christianity, and quite unworthy a place in the New Testament. Eusebius is doubtful regarding the genuineness of the Book of Revelations; and decides nothing with regard to the authenticity of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Origen and other learned writers who lived nearest the age in which the books of the New Testament were written, also doubted with regard to the authorship of some of the Epistles, placed by Eusebius in his 2nd Class, as well as respecting the genuineness of the Book of Revelations. Still these have been retained in our collection of the Scriptures.

Such then is the origin of the *Christian's Book*, so far as concerns the decision respecting what should be considered scripture and what should not. It is throughout evident that our present canon is the result to which the learning of many generations, and the decisions of many councils, have gradually led. The general conclusion has been that our present collection of narratives are, for the most part, genuine productions of the persons whose names they bear; and that they are divine or holy writings, because they contain a history of God's revelations to man-

kind, and are the only source whence the truth of Christ's doctrines and history can be ascertained. The grounds according to which the early church settled the canon of Scripture were the internal credibility of the several writings, the authority of the authors of them — who must be Apostles or the companions of Apostles, and the certainty of the traditions which ascribed the works to their respective authors. The decisions of the early Christian Church on these points have not been extensively called in question ; and it is plain that no later generation could be such competent judges as they were, respecting the *external* evidence of tradition — however much better we may be able to appreciate the *internal* evidence — or the signs of purity and divinity and authenticity obtained by examining their contents.

Next, let us consider the contents of the Bible. What is it that renders this work so important, so invaluable to Christians? And what are the causes why so great a variety of opinion prevails on this subject? No one can consider this subject carefully without being astounded by the paradoxes which force themselves on his attention.

Here is a book which is more extensively read than any, over the whole globe, and yet perhaps *less known* — less really understood — than most others. Here is a work which is perused by all, and yet not thoroughly comprehended by one. Here is a book placed in the hands of a young child, as so simple that he who runs may read it: and yet concerning the true and full meaning of the different parts of it, there have been and still are opinions as varied as the characters of those who study it. Here is a book which, without note or comment, is read by the hour — at home and in school, in the cottage and in the palace,

on land and on the ocean's billow, by the youngest and the oldest, and that with pleasure, instruction, and edification—soothing the pangs of remorse, rising the hopes of the disconsolate, reproaching yet healing the crimes of the sinner, leading the criminal to repentance, and the repenting to newness of life; and yet this same book has employed the whole lifetime of the wisest and best of men thoroughly to comprehend its history, its purport, its nature, and its origin. Though used as a class book for the youngest in schools, it is still the constant study of the most learned in their closets. Though some parts are so simple and clear, "that the wayfaring man cannot err therein," there are others which have still escaped the erudition of ages—after volumes upon volumes have been heaped up in order to explain them. So far has this been carried in regard to one short epistle—that addressed to the Hebrews—that a work containing no less than 2000 octavo pages, concisely written and confined to its interpretation has, appeared upon it.*

It is obvious, after these reflections, that it is no easy, short, or light subject, on which we are entering. A work that cannot be understood in a lifetime, cannot be even superficially examined in an hour. It will be sufficient here, first to point out the prevailing points of view from which judgments so different have proceeded, and then the chief errors against which each who handles the sacred volume must be careful to guard himself. We shall then understand why opinions vary, and what are the views which an impartial examination of it is likely to lead us to form.

* By Prof. Bleek, of Bonn.

There are various modes in which the Scriptures are read, and for various purposes. 1. There are some who read, like children, merely for the sake of the story, for the interesting narrative, for the remarkable and astonishing things related in them, and who will naturally be gratified in proportion as they find something to excite their wonder, or to interest their hopes and fears respecting the heroes of the various narratives. Thus the story of Joseph and his brethren, the history of David, the passage through the Red Sea, and the Jewish wars, are the especial favorites with readers of this class. They take the literal sense of every passage, and are startled at nothing that is wonderful in them ; they regard not the geography nor the chronology, the style of the writers nor yet their agreement or disagreement with each other ; and naturally they find no difficulties. All is clear and easy to them !

2. There is another class, the opposite to the above, and a much smaller one, who care little for the Bible as a collection of Stories and Biographies any further than they can make out from them a clear and consistent history, and find out the actual facts which in each case are represented ; who it is that relates them, and when and where the authors lived ; how far they were correct in all they state, and where they unintentionally err from the popular philosophy of the age, and where from the strength of their own imaginations. These readers are desirous of ascertaining not only the outward dress, the manners and the customs of the day, their rites and sacrifices, but also the views which then prevailed regarding the outward universe, concerning the creation of the world, the nature of the heavens and the earth, of the sun, moon and stars ;

in short, they would comprehend the Astronomy, Geography, and Geology of the ancient Hebrews, not in order to adopt their opinions — the time for this is long past — but to contrast these with our present knowledge. Readers of this class are careful to gain such information respecting all these points as will enable them to enter into the thoughts and situations both of those who wrote and of those who first read the sacred narratives, so that they may transport themselves, in imagination, to the spot, and back to the age in which all occurred. At the same time they use all the information obtained since then, in order to judge the opinions of the various writers, and to ascertain the reality of the facts recorded. Their whole interest in the Bible is a scientific one, to gain information, and to construct or resolve theories: they desire to know the whole meaning of each writer, in order afterwards to ascertain the truth.

3. There is a third class, differing widely from both the foregoing, who constitute the majority of the religiously Christian world. They care little for the letter of Scripture, and do not examine into its correspondence with actual facts; nor yet into the opinions, manners and habits of the people concerning whom the writings treat, and from whom they proceed. It is solely to cultivate their religious affections, and to impart religious hopes and consolations, that they employ the sacred narrative. It is, in one word, for *edification* that they read, and every construction of words which will increase this power of the sacred book over their minds is eagerly embraced or invented by them; whilst every interpretation which tends to bring down their soaring thoughts, or, as they would think, to naturalize or materialize a work, every page of

which is often considered by them as divinely inspired truth, is naturally regarded as impiety.

It is here then that the great difficulty lies. All these three modes of viewing the Bible are true ; all are adapted to various minds ; all are perhaps suited and necessary for every man at different periods of his life. He first may, as a child, read those most interesting narratives which present no difficulties, and which arrest the attention, interest the affections, and lead the mind to look upwards to a God in heaven. Then gradually as his mind ripens, he may examine all the difficulties of Scripture, so as to enter entirely into their spirit, and *know the people who wrote,* or *those about whom* the narratives were written. In fact, he may with great advantage understand and “search the Scriptures,” in order to find out the will of God, the divine truths contained in them. And then gradually will his mind become more and more inclined to read them as suggesters of devotional thought, as awakens of fervent feelings towards God, as imparting to him higher views of duty and of man’s destiny than he can obtain in any other way. Doubtless this last is the purpose—the aim of the Bible. It is on this ground that it is regarded as divine, as *the word of God*, as *a revelation from Him*, because, when read with a devotional spirit, after having been previously examined and comprehended by the understanding, the Bible does reveal to the reader God’s WILL, His endless works and everlasting ways.

(To be concluded in our next.)

TRUE RELIGION is a life unfolded within, not something forced on us from abroad.

THE NEW BIRTH.

BY REV. W. G. ELIOT.

THE truth concerning our nature by birth, and the spiritual condition to which we are brought by regeneration, or the new birth, seems to be this. We are born with a mixed constitution, physical, intellectual, and moral. These, as they originally came from the creative hand of God, were pronounced to be good. The moral nature is the highest, that is the soul, and to this the physical, and intellectual, the body and the mind, should minister. But, by the necessity of the case, the physical is developed first, "the first man is of the earth, earthy." Our first wants, our first enjoyments and sufferings, are purely physical. The first exercise of the faculty of thought takes that direction. Self-love, which is needful for self-preservation, is thus early developed. Self-indulgence in what is pleasant, and angry resistance to what is unpleasant, are the natural consequences. All this is not sinful, it is simply of the earth, earthy. It is our physical nature. Gradually the higher nature begins to appear. The sweet affections of the child, pure and truthful, begin to expand. A sense of right, of justice, and of truth, gradually shows itself. At first very weak, but also very correct, for the instincts of childhood upon all moral subjects are sure to be right. In the progress of development, the intellect adds strength either to the physical or moral constitution, according to the natural temperament and the circumstances of education and example.

The period when moral responsibility begins is hard to determine. It certainly does not begin until there is a

clear perception of right and wrong, and a choice of one or the other ; but whenever it begins, the child is conscious of difficulties. His first exercise, as a moral being, is a struggle, a conflict. There is an enemy to be conquered, a victory to be won. Conscience claims the supremacy ; it says, Thou must, or Thou must not ; but the body, with its wants and its enjoyments, resists its commands. Reason pleads for the right, passion and appetite for the wrong. It is the struggle of life commenced, the spirit against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. The result, if human weakness receives no heavenly aid, is but too evident. The physical, that is to say the powers of the flesh, being first developed, is strong and vigorous, while the moral has but an infant's strength and soon gives way. The passions gain strength by what they feed on ; the intellect is brutalized and brought into their service ; the conscience is buried under the accumulated rubbish of sin.

Even in Christian lands, and under the influences of Christian education and Christian example, which is a strong divine helping to the principle of right, the great majority of men and women, when they come to the age of mature life, find that the work of moral discipline is still to be accomplished. There is a difference in their degrees of sinfulness ; but with nine out of ten, the prevailing principle of conduct is self-love, or self-indulgence, or worldly ambition. In nine cases out of ten, therefore, a radical change is needed, before they can properly be called Christians. I call it a radical change, for if you change the principle of life, as I have already said, you change every thing. It is not only an outward change, for the proprieties of life may already be observed. It is chiefly an inward change, which concerns the motives

and the affections. In many instances where the outward conduct continues the same, the real change of character is equally great.

I have said, in nine cases out of ten, that such will be the result; perhaps I might have used even stronger language, for there are very few persons who are not under the necessity, sooner or later, of that strong moral exercise, through which, by the blessing of God, the worldly and selfish heart becomes religious. Sometimes it is a violent and short struggle, sometimes a slow and laborious self-discipline; sometimes we can tell the day and the hour when it begins, and sometimes we almost doubt whether it has commenced or not, until it is accomplished. But with nearly all, in some way or other, the change must be accomplished from the earthly to the spiritual, from the worldly to the religious, from the selfish to the self-denying character, after we have come to the years of conscious self-direction.

In a few instances, equally rare and beautiful, the development of our nature is so healthy, that the soul, almost from the first, asserts its rightful supremacy. This is sometimes the result of pure Christian influences, the wise training of parents, the example of good and pious teachers, which may be called the human agency by which the Divine Spirit is working. Sometimes, even when surrounded by the worst influences of sin, in the dens of iniquity, or in the high places of worldliness, the child is seen to grow up with almost stainless purity, through some mysterious guiding of which it is not conscious, but which leads heavenward, as by an angel's hand. In such cases there seems never to be a struggle between the flesh and the spirit. The soul grows up to the heavenly life, al-

most as the seed grows up to its appointed beauty. Yet I believe that, even in such cases, if we could understand the full working of the soul, we should find here, as elsewhere, what is called the new birth, which is the passing from the earthly or natural state to the spiritual or heavenly. It may take place very early and very gradually, but I think that it is not the less real. The life of the spirit is not that to which we are first born, but the life of the flesh. The second man, and not the first, is the Lord from heaven. When Christ is formed in the soul, it is the redemption of the soul from the natural earthly influence. If it is effected before that influence has brought degradation, the thanksgiving to God may be greater, but it is not less a redemption.

Upon this subject, however, I would not dispute. Such instances are as rare as they are blessed. With by far the greater part of the human family, the experience is very different and far more painful. We find ourselves laden with sins, we scarcely know how. We are walking in a wrong direction, almost before we have thought whither the path leads. Our first serious thoughts of heaven are awakened, by our seeing that our faces are not turned heavenward. It is the restlessness of the soul under the bondage of sin, that arouses us to assert its true dignity. Through some human agency, or through the working of our own mind, God speaks to us, and if we hearken, the conflict begins, the result of which is properly called a deliverance and a victory.

The proof of Regeneration is in the life. "Let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." It is not in professions, nor in ecstasies, nor in flaming zeal, much less in the self-right-

eous condemnation of others ; but in a life of genuine goodness, purity, and truth. The evidence of the Christian spirit is 'in the Christian character. By their fruits shall ye know them. " Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world."

CHRIST AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

BY REV. J. MARTINEAU.

PERSONAL repentance, the transference of the life from conventionalism to conviction, the kindling of pure and productive affections, must precede and usher in the reign of God upon the earth ; men must truly venerate the Deity within them, and he will not be slow to descend with his peace on society around them. The holy and divine must first be recognised and enshrined in the individual and private heart ; and then will follow its wider conquests over humanity. *There* is the home and citadel of its strength, from which it sallies forth to win its public triumphs, and establish its general rule ; *there* the centre whence its influence radiates, till it embraces and penetrates even the outlying margin of barbarism and sin.

Christ then, whose voice is Christianity, addresses himself first to the individual conscience ; indulging in no dreams of a renovated world without, till he has flung his appeal to the man within ; looks *there* for the creative and vital forces, which are to make all things new. He speaks to his hearers, not as to passive creatures who

might look about them for some position in which it might befall them to be good, but as to beings conscious of internal power to strive and win the excellence they love ; to grapple athletically with the oppositions of circumstance ; and run the appointed race, though with panting breast and bleeding feet. Herein, I conceive, did Christ preach a gospel wholly at variance with the prevailing temper and philosophy of our times. It is their tendency not to excite men to what they ought to be, but to manage them as they are. The age has been prolific (like many of its predecessors) in inventions and proposed social arrangements, by which we may sit still and be made into the right kind of men ; which will render duty the smoothest thing on earth, by warning all interfering motives off the spot, and turn the Christian race into a stroll upon a mossy lawn. The trust and boast of our period is not in its individual energy and virtue, not in its great and good minds, but in its external civilization, in schemes of social and political improvement, in things to be done *for us*, rather than *by us*, in what we are to *get*, more than in what we are to *be*. We have had systems of education, which were to mould the minds of our children into a perfection that would make experience blush ; systems of self-culture, to nurse our faculties into full maturity ; systems of socialism, for mending the whole world, and presenting every one with a virtuous mind, without the least trouble on his part. Even those who escape this enthusiasm of system are apt to place an extravagant trust in sets of outward circumstances ; and dazzled by the splendid forms which modern civilization assumes, to conceive of them as powers in themselves, independently of the minds that fill and use them. Commerce, mechanical

art, and more reasonably, but still with some error, the school, and the printing press, are each in turn cited as in themselves securing the indefinite progress of nations and mankind. It would be absurd to doubt that these causes operate with constant and beneficent power on the mind of a people ; but on this very account an exclusive and irrational reliance may be placed upon them. It is obvious that two methods exist, of aiming at human improvement — by adjusting circumstances without and by addressing the affections within ; by creating facilities of position, or by developing force of character ; by mechanism or by mind. The one is institutional and systematic, operating on a large scale, reaching individuals circuitously and at last ; the other is personal and moral, the influence of soul on soul, life creating life, beginning in the regeneration of the individual and spreading thence over communities ; the one, in short, reforming from the circumference to the centre, the other from the centre to the circumference. And in comparing these, it is not difficult to show the superior triumphs of the latter, which was the method of Christ and Christianity. Indeed the great peculiarity of the Christian view of life is to be found in its preference of the inward element over the outward ; its reliance upon the least showy and most deep buried portions of society for the evangelizing of the world ; and still more upon the profoundest and most faintly whispered sentiments of the soul for the regeneration of the individual. It forbids us to say, “ Lo, here ! or Lo, there ! ” and assures us that “ the kingdom of God is within ” us.

SOME men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it ; anything but live for it.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

ANONYMOUS.

THE most important part of family worship is united prayer. By prayer, I mean the outpouring of an earnest heart in the name of Jesus. It is not prayer when you merely read or repeat a heartless form. You do not ask a blessing on your daily bread, when you merely mutter over it a charm — a few inarticulate words for custom's sake. Nor do you pray when you bend the knee, and read or say a few petitions which you do not feel, and which you forget as soon as you have uttered. It is prayer when you ask from God blessings which you are really anxious to obtain, and when, in a conviction of your unworthiness, you ask them through him who indeed is worthy, the well-beloved Son of God. It is prayer when you ask so earnestly that you remember afterwards what you sought, and so believingly, that looking up you expect an answer. Be earnest. Better no prayer, than give your family a distaste at prayer, by your dulness and formality. Be honest. Deal truly with the God of Truth. Do not mock the Searcher of hearts. Give yourself to the Lord — then set up his worship. Go to God yourself, and then seek to bring your children with you.

It will depend on the age of your family and the amount of your leisure, how long the service should be. Some hurry it over in a way which shows that they have no heart in it themselves. Others prolong it so, that every one else is wearied. Ten minutes of a formal service will look longer than twice the time when the whole soul is in it.

Be consistent. "Behave yourself wisely in a perfect way. Walk within your house with a perfect heart." If you be devout in prayer, and unholy in practice; if you be heavenly-minded at the hour of worship, and frivolous, or proud, or passionate all the day; if you teach your children in the morning, "Be not conformed to this world," and if half the day's lessons be designed to conform them to the world as nearly as possible; if you pray for your household that you may be all meek, and gentle, and kindly-affectioned one to another, and then treat your servants as haughtily as if they were your slaves or your enemies; your contradictory prayers and practices will be a terrible stumbling-block in their way to the kingdom. Do you hesitate? What is your excuse?

"I never saw the advantages you describe. It has always been a dull service wherever I have seen it." But *you* need not make it dull. Throw your whole heart and soul into it, and it will be lively enough. It is often dull because it is a mere form. Do *you* make it a living service, and it will not be dull. It is often dull because it is tedious. Do not spin it out. Better one paragraph of scripture, feelingly and intelligently read, than a whole chapter listlessly drawled over. Better a prayer no longer than the publican's, if the whole soul be in it, than a weary form without feeling. Be fervent, and you will not be dull. Family prayer has often been so conducted, that instead of wearying at it, children felt it a punishment to be excluded. I was once told of a cottage patriarch who was born in those days when Scotland had a church in almost every house. There was one in his father's dwelling, and when he pitched a tent for himself, he builded an altar. Round that altar a goodly number

of olive plants grew up, but one by one they were either planted out in families of their own, or God took them, till he and his old partner found themselves, just as at their first outset in life, alone. But their family worship continued as of old. At last his fellow-traveller left him. Still he carried on the worship by himself. So sweet was the memory of it in his father's house, and so pleasant had he found it in his own, that he could not give it up. But as he sat in his silent habitation, morning and evening, his quivering voice was heard singing the old psalm-tune, reading aloud the chapter, and praying as if others still worshipped by his side. He has not found it dull.

“I have no time.” If you really value time, family prayer is good husbandry of time. What you do with God's blessing is much better and faster done than what you do without it, *and it is not likely to need doing over again*. You will find it here as Sir Mathew Hale found it with the Sabbath. What you take from God, he can easily take from you. If other things were equal, I should expect far more to be accomplished in a day, by the man whose spirit had been tranquilized, his resolution fortified, and his activity quickened by morning prayer, than from the man who impiously hurried out to do it all without asking God's presence. Philip Henry, who was an excellent economist of time, when early out of bed to hasten the preparations for a day's travel, as he called his children together, used to say to them, “Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey.” Try this homely maxim, and you will find it true.

“Our family is so small.” How many are there of you? Are there two? Then, “Wheresoever *two*,” (see Matt. xviii. 19, 20.) John Howard and his valet, as they

journeyed from place to place, used to have family worship by themselves, if they could get no one else to join them. "Wherever I have a tent," he would say, "there God shall have an altar." If there be two of you, though it should be but a Ruth and a Naomi, a mother and her daughter, your family is large enough to worship God, and to get the blessing of those who worship him.

"My family is so large. There are so many servants, and often so many visitors, that I have not courage to begin." If your family be large, the obligation to begin is all the greater. Many suffer by your neglect. And if your congregation be numerous, the likelihood that some good will be done is the greater; for there are more to share the benefit. And why want courage? Should not the very fact that you are acknowledging God encourage you? "Them that honor me, I will honor." Begin it believingly, and in the very attempt courage will come.

"But I have no gift of prayer. I cannot lead the devotions of my family." Prayer is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Before you begin ask God to give you His Spirit to teach you. I have heard of stammering men who were eloquent in prayer, for the Spirit of God spake by them. When you pray, remember that God is listening. You have called on Him to hearken. You have asked him to lend you an attentive ear, for you are about to ask mercies for yourself and your dearest friends. Remember that God is listening, and you will forget that men are hearkening. And they in their turn, when they find that you are really praying, will have no time to criticise — for they will be constrained to join you in your prayer.

But, perhaps, I have not after all touched your real objection. You refuse to pray in your family, because you

know that you do not pray in your closet. You evade it, because you know that your life is such that family worship would, in your case, be a mockery, and would only add hypocrisy to sin. Or you are under the influences of that false shame which will be felt to be the most shameful of all things, when the Son of God comes again in his glory. Is it so? And are you about to throw away this advice with your purpose unchanged? Then I can only say that the day is coming, when you will wish that you never had any brethren,—(Luke xvi. 28,) that the Lord had written you childless,—that you had been a poor outcast with no roof to shelter you, rather than the ungodly husband and father, and master, which you this day are,—for then you had been free from guiltiness in the case of others' souls.

The considerations by which I have tried to urge you to a discharge of this duty are, the obligations which you owe to yourselves, to your children, and to God: to yourselves, who will never have the same inward happiness, nor the satisfaction in your family circle, till once the voice of rejoicing, the melody and praise, which are heard in the tabernacles of the righteous, be heard in your own: to your children, who will rise up and call you blessed, if you guide their feet into the way of peace: to God, who offers to become the never-slumbering keeper of you and yours, and to uphold your going out and coming in from this time forth for ever. These are the considerations I have used. Some of you may think that I would have succeeded better, if I had dwelt on the beautiful and picturesque of family religion. I might have done this; and I might have planted you amidst the worshipping household, and invited you to listen to the cordial music of their

psalms, and the pathos and fervor of their prayer. But one thing hinders me. I know that all that is beautiful and picturesque in domestic devotion, has not only been witnessed but described by those whom its loveliness could never win to an imitation. It is one thing for a heart full of sensibility to be touched by contemplating the beauty and the joys of true devotion, and quite another thing for a renewed heart to feel these joys.

It is told of Sir Walter Scott, that sometimes of an evening he took his guests to an arbor on his lawn, and let them hear the distant music of a sacred tune. It came from the cottage of one of his dependants,* and fell touchingly on the ear of the great minstrel himself,—but it only touched the ear. He and his visitors went back to the drawing-room at Abbotsford, but it was not to raise with their better skill an evening hymn of thanksgiving to the God of all their mercies. The distant cadence of a covenanting melody was somewhat romantic, but nearer hand it would have blended ill with the dance and the tabret. They all agreed that the voice of psalms from a cottage was picturesque,—but that in the mansion, the harp and the viol would be more appropriate. If higher considerations have no weight, I am sure that a little picture-work will not prevail upon you.

Readers, some of you are the heads of happy families to-day. All that I ask is, that you would make them happier still. Happy, not only in your love, but in the love of God, happy for time and through eternity.

* The "psalm-singing" servant was a brother born for adversity, and on the breaking-up of the establishment, refused to leave his master, and rather than leave him offered to serve him for nothing. In his new post of ploughman, it affected the poor baronet to here "Old Peep" whistling to his team, as he trod the fresh-turned furrows. It was a change to both; but it would seem that the one possessed a source of perennial joy which outward calamities could not dry up nor trouble.

BOOK NOTICES.

FAMILIAR SKETCHES OF SCULPTURE AND SCULPTORS. By the author of "Sketches of the lives of the old Painters," &c. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. Sold in Montreal, by B. Dawson, Place d'Armes.

IN popular form and pleasant style this book presents a large amount of useful information in the Art of Sculpture. The first sketch is devoted to Winckelmann, who flourished about a century since, in consideration of his eminence as the historian of ancient art. Then we have the first chapter, treating of Egyptian Art, after which we find the consecutive chapters, in their proper order, embracing Grecian, Etruscan, Roman, Mediæval, and Modern Sculpture. Interwoven with sketches of the Art, we have also sketches of the Artists, from Dædalus the Athenian, who flourished some twelve centuries before the Christian era, to Miss Hosmer the American, who at this present hour is pursuing her studies at Rome with so much promise.

FORREST ON THE TRINITY. Meadville, Pa.: Printed by the Theological Press. Sold in Montreal, by C. Bryson, St. Francois Xavier Street.

THE purpose of this book is amply set forth on its full title page, which runs thus: "Some account of the Origin and Progress of Trinitarian Theology, in the second, third, and succeeding centuries; and of the manner in which its doctrines gradually supplanted the Unitarianism of the Primitive Church. Compiled from the works of various theological and historical writers. By James Forrest, A.M."

THE CHILD'S MATINS AND VESPERS. By a Mother. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co. Sold in Montreal, by C. Bryson, St. Francois Xavier Street.

A SIMPLE and appropriate book of devotion for children. We hope that mothers will appreciate this labor of parental love on the part of a mother, and avail themselves of it. "This little manual," says the author, "was written for my own dear children, and I hope it will be a valued friend to them, and other little ones."

POPULAR LEGENDS OF BRITANNY.**THE WIND AND SPIRIT OF THE RAIN GODDESS.**

Two books, translations, from the publishing house of Crosby, Nichols & Co. ; and for sale in Montreal, by B. Dawson, Place d'Armes.

INTELLIGENCE.

MONTREAL UNITARIAN CONGREGATION. — SOIREE. — On Thursday, 23rd February last, the members and friends of the Montreal Unitarian Congregation met together at a soiree, in the basement rooms of the church. The rooms were decorated with great taste, there being an abundance of evergreens and flowers, while the walls were draped with crimson cloth, and copiously furnished with fine prints and oil pictures. Such pleasant decorations, with centre tables furnished with finely illustrated books, gave to the place the air of a private drawing-room. Through the kindness of the gentlemen connected with the British North American, and Vermont and Boston, Telegraph Companies, the Electric Telegraph was established in the rooms, and messages freely transmitted from one part to another, thus giving an opportunity to see the practical working of this wonderful instrument. The chair was occupied by the Hon. Adam Ferrie, and addresses made by Rev. John Cordner and Dr. Workman. The attendance was large, and the gross proceeds of the tickets were appropriated to the purchase of books for the Sunday School. On the following evening, the teachers and pupils of the Sunday School came together in the same rooms, and had a very cheerful social meeting. Both evenings were most agreeably spent, as all testify who were so fortunate as to be there.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION. — This Association has made a proposition to increase its means of printing, sale, and circulation of religious books on a more extended scale than anything it has yet attempted. They propose to invite their friends to co-operate in raising the sum of fifty thousand dollars. With this sum they will be able to produce editions of the Works of Channing, Ware, and others, at a cheaper rate than they can now be had, and thus supply a demand already existing and daily increasing, for books containing the views of Christianity as set

forth by Unitarian writers. At a meeting of the friends of the Association, held on 12th February last, a committee was appointed to carry into execution the proposition, and it is understood that this committee should report at the adjourned meeting, to be held on the afternoon of March first, at the Freeman Place Chapel, Boston. We hope they will be abundantly successful in carrying out this noble object.

THE "LIBERAL CHRISTIAN" AND ITS CRITICS.—The *Liberal Christian* commenced its course with very moderate expectations from the Montreal Press. If its appearance should be noticed at all by the secular prints, it relied on simple justice being done. Nor has it been disappointed in this. With scarcely an exception, we believe, it has been noticed by the English portion of the press, and dealt with fairly,—one of the papers, indeed, (the *Pilot*,) though its writer stands on the "orthodox" side of the line in theology, was even laudatory. But we have a religious press as well as a secular; and, strange to say, we had less confidence in the justice of the former than in that of the latter. The Catholic journal, however, in its notice, certainly gave us no reason to complain. It was left to the journal of Protestant orthodoxy to form the exception to the general candor of the press. In its Supplement for February, the *Montreal Witness*, while noticing the *Liberal Christian*, takes a sling, of course, at the Unitarians, and as a farther matter of course, becomes very puerile—we should rather say in this instance, quite anile. Here is the burden of the criticism:—1st. The Unitarians have "a phraseology," and "phrases." [Could they not in some way be deprived of the use of language?] 2nd. That "they are welcome" to them. [A concession which ought to be duly appreciated.] 3rd. That Trinitarians perform their duties to God and man "more faithfully" than Unitarians. [A very comfortable assurance certainly for the Trinitarians,—“Lord I thank thee,” &c. &c.] Next come two points about which, it seems, Unitarians "ought to know," and "understand;" and which they do know and understand very well. Then the critic returns to his first trouble—the "phraseology," and the "phrases;" and winds up by declaring that Unitarians "have nothing positive to teach," and rather decline any "attempt to disprove" Evangelical views; thus at once indicating his extensive acquaintance with controversial theology, and by denying them either a positive or negative position, leaving the luckless Unitarians on a point of space in the theological world rather more minute than even the needle's point of the Schoolmen. Surely it is a wonder the mute types do not rebel against the fingers of the compositor, when set up to imprint such anility.