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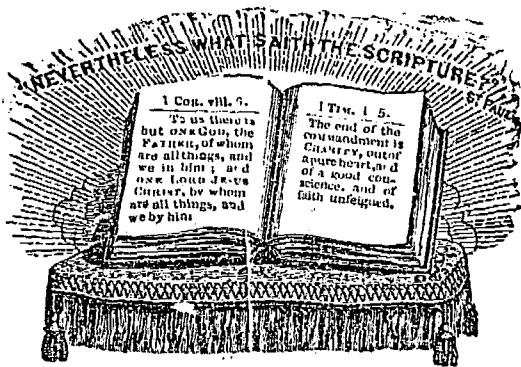
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THE BIBLE



CHRISTIAN.

TRUTH, HOLINESS,

LIBERTY, LOVE.

VOL. IV.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1847.

No. 2

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

[The following Letter on the Eternity of Future Punishment, written by the Rev. John Foster, a distinguished English Baptist Clergyman, and addressed to a young Minister, is contained in the "Life and Correspondence" of Mr. Foster, recently published.]

DEAR SIR,—If you could have been apprised how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an opinion (or impression) admitted in early life disperse with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question. Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of Scripture is so strongly in favor of it that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself not convinced of the orthodox doctrine. If asked why not?—I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of Scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favor of final, universal restitution. It is the moral argument, as it may be named, that presses irresistibly on my mind—that which comes in the stupendous idea of eternity.

It appears to me that the teachers and believers of the orthodox doctrine hardly ever make an earnest, strenuous effort to form a conception of eternity; or rather a conception somewhat of the nature of a faint incipient, approximation.—Because it is confessedly beyond the compass of thought, it is suffered to go without an attempt at thinking of it. They utter the term in the easy currency of language; have a vague and transitory idea of something obscurely vast, and do not labor to place and detain the mind in intense protracted contemplation, seeking all expedients for expanding and aggravating the awful import of such a word. Though every mode of illustration is feeble and impotent, one would surely think there would be an insuppressible impulse to send forth the thoughts to the utmost possible reach into the immensity—when it is an immensity into which our own most essential interests are infinitely extended. Truly it is very strange that even religious minds can keep so quietly aloof from the amazing, the overwhelming contemplation of what they have the destiny and the near prospect of entering upon.

Expedients of illustration of what eternity is not, supply the best attainable means of assisting remotely toward a glimmering apprehension of what it is. All that is within human capacity is to imagine the vastest measures of time, and to look to the termination of these as only touching the mere commencement of eternity.

For example, it has been suggested to imagine the number of particles, atoms, contained in this globe, and suppose them one by one annihilated, each in a thousand years, till all were gone; but just as well say a million, or a million of million of years or ages, it is all the same as against infinite duration.

Extend the thought of such process to our whole mundane system, and finally to the whole material universe: it is still the same. Or, imagine a series of numerical figures, in close order extended to a line of such a length that it would encircle the globe, like the equator—or that would run along with the earth's orbit round the sun—or with the outermost planet Uranus—or that it would draw a circle of which the radius should be from the earth or sun to Sirius—or that should encompass the entire material universe, which, as being material, cannot be infinite.

The most stupendous of these measures of time would have an end; and would, when completed, be still nothing to eternity.

Now think of an infliction of misery protracted through such a period, and at the end of it being only commencing—not one smallest step nearer a conclusion:—the case just the same if that sum of figures were multiplied by itself. And then think of man—his nature, his situation, the circumstances of his brief sojourn and trial on earth. Far be it from us to make light of the demerit of sin, and to remonstrate with the supreme Judge against a severe chastisement, of whatever moral nature we may regard the infliction to be. But still, what is man?—He comes into the world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil. He comes among a crowd of temptations adapted to his innate evil propensities.—He grows up (incomparably the greater proportion of the race) in great ignorance; his judgment weak, and under numberless beguilements into error; while his passions and appetites are strong; his conscience unequally matched against their power—in the majority of men, but feebly and rudely constituted. The influence of whatever good instructions he may receive is counteracted by a combination of opposite influences almost constantly acting on him. He is essentially and inevitably unapt to be powerfully acted on by what is invisible and future. In addition to all which, there is the intervention and activity of the great tempter and destroyer. In short, his condition is such that there is no hope of him, but from a direct, special operation on him of what we denominate grace. Is it not so? are we not convinced—is it not the plain doctrine of Scripture—is there not irresistible evidence from a view of the actual condition of the human world—that no man can become good, in the Christian sense, can become fit for a holy and happy place hereafter, but by this operation *ab extra*. But this is arbitrary and discriminative on the part of the sovereign Agent, and independent of the will of man. And how awfully evident is it, that this indispensable operation takes place only on a comparatively small proportion of the collective race.

Now this creature, thus constituted and circumstanced, passes a few fleeting years on earth, a short sinful course; in which he does often what, notwithstanding his ignorance and ill-disciplined judgment and conscience, he knows to be wrong, and neglects what he knows to be his duty; and consequently, for a greater or less measure of guilt, widely different in different offenders, deserves punishment. But endless punishment! hopeless misery, through a duration to which the enormous terms above imagined, will be absolutely nothing! I acknowledge my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief, together with a belief in the divine goodness—the belief that "God is love," that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence, charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that in adoring the divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an "unknown God." But if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating his bringing, of his sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such a condition that they certainly will and must—*must*, by their nature and circumstances, go wrong, and be miserable, unless prevented by especial grace—which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and at the same time fixing on their delinquency a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest arch-angel's faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror.

It must be in deep humility that we venture to apply to the measures of the divine government, the rules indispensable to the equity of human administration. Yet we may advert to the principle in human legislation, that the man tempted to crime should, as far as is possible without actual experience, be apprised of the nature and measure of the penal consequence. It should be something the main force of which can be placed in intelligible

opposition, so to speak, to the temptation. If it be something totally out of the scope of his faculties to apprehend, to realize to his mind, that threatened something is unknown, has not its appropriate fitness to deter him. There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him if he could have a competent notice of it; but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him, the threatened penalty can only be in proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it; but as an evil to be suffered it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents suffering on, and still intertainably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this:—Oh! if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil.

A common argument has been that sin is an infinite evil, that is, of infinite demerit, as an offence against an infinite Being; and that since a finite creature cannot suffer infinitely in measure, he must in duration. But surely, in all reason, the limited, and in the present instance *diminutive nature of the criminal* must be an essential part of the case for judgment. Every act must, for one of its proportions, be measured by the nature and condition of the agent. And it would seem that one principle in that rule of proportion should be, that the offending agent should be capable of being aware of the magnitude (the amount, if we might use such a word) of the offence he commits, by being capable of something like an adequate conception of the being against whom it is committed. A perverse child committing an offence against a great monarch, of whose dignity it had some, but a vastly inadequate, apprehension, would not be punished in the same manner as an offender of high endowments and responsibility, and fully aware of the dignity of the personage offended. The one would be sharply chastised; the other might as justly be condemned to death. In the present case, the offender does or may know that the Being offended against is of awful majesty; and therefore the offence is one of great aggravation, and he will justly be punished with great severity; but, by his extremely contracted and feeble faculties, as the lowest in the scale of strictly rational and accountable creatures in the whole creation, he is infinitely incapable of any adequate conception of the greatness of the Being offended against. He is, then, according to the argument, obnoxious to a punishment not in any proportion to his own nature, but alone to that infinity of the supreme nature, which is to him infinitely unconceivable and unknown.

If an evil act of a human being may be of infinite demerit, why may not a good one be of infinite excellence or merit as having also a reference to the infinite Being? Is it not plain that every act of a finite nature must have, in all senses, the finite quality of that nature—cannot, therefore, be of infinite demerit?

Can we—I would say with reverence—can we realize it as possible that a lost soul, after countless millions of ages, and in prospect of an interminable succession of such enormous periods, can be made to have the conviction, absolute and perfect, that all this is a just, an equitable infliction, and from a Power as good as he is just, for a few short sinful years on earth—years and sins presumed to be retained most vividly in memory, and everlastingly growing clearer, vaster and more terrible to retrospective view in their magnitude of infinite evil—every stupendous period of duration, by which they have actually been left at a distance, seeming to bring them, in contrast to all laws of memory, nearer and ever nearer to view, by the continually aggravated experience of their consequences.

Yes, those twenty, forty, seventy years, growing up to infinity of horror in the review in proportion to the distance which the con-

demned spirit recedes from them—all eternity not sufficing to reveal fully what those years contained!—millions on millions of ages for each single evil thought or word!

But it is usually alleged that there will be an endless continuance of sinning, with probably an endless aggravation, and therefore the punishment must be endless. Is not this like an admission of disproportion between the punishment and the original cause of its infliction? But suppose the case to be so,—that is to say, that the punishment is not a retribution simply for the guilt of the momentary existence on earth, but a continued punishment of the continued, ever-aggravated guilt in the eternal state; the allegation is of no avail in vindication of the doctrine; because the first consignment to the dreadful state necessitates a continuance of the criminality; the doctrine teaching that it is of the essence, and is an awful aggravation, of the original consignment, that it dooms the condemned to maintain the criminal spirit unchanged for ever. The doom to sin as well as to suffer, and, according to the argument, to sin in order to suffer, is inflicted as the punishment of the sin committed in the mortal state. Virtually, therefore, the eternal punishment is punishment of the sins of time.

Under the light (or the darkness) of this doctrine, how inconceivably mysterious and awful is the aspect of the whole economy of this human world! The immensely greater number of the race hitherto, through all ages and regions, passing a short life under no illuminating, transforming influence of their Creator; ninety-nine in a hundred of them perhaps have never even received any authenticated message from Heaven; passing off the world in a state unfit for a spiritual, heavenly, and happy kingdom elsewhere; and all destined to everlasting misery. The thoughtful spirit has a question silently suggested to it of far more emphatic import than that of him who exclaimed, "Hast thou made all men in vain?"

Even the dispensation of redemption by the Mediator, the only light that shines through this dark economy—how profoundly mysterious in its slow progress, as yet, in its uncorrupted purity, and saving efficacy. What proportion of the earth's inhabitants are, at this hour, the subjects of its vital agency? It was not the divine volition that the success should be greater—that a greater number should be saved by it—or most certainly, most necessarily, its efficacy would have been greater. But in thus withholding from so large a portion of mankind even the knowledge, and even from so vast a majority in the nominally Christian nations the divine application, indispensable to the efficacy of the Christian dispensation, could it be that the divine purpose was to consign so many of his creatures, existing under such fearful circumstances, to the doomed eternal misery? Does the belief consist with any conception we can form of infinite goodness combined with infinite power?

But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures?* There is a force in their expression at which we well may tremble. On no allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this: that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable duration, and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, a reason in the moral estimate of things, of stupendous, of infinite urgency, involving our conceptions of the divine goodness and equity, and leaving those

conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorised. Perhaps there is some pertinence in the suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favour of universal restitution; that the great difference of degrees of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture, affords an argument against its perpetuity; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders; every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the principle of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *how could* the doctrine have been more plainly and spiritually asserted than it is in the Scripture language? In answer, I ask, how do we construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no possibility of understanding the language in a different, equivocal or questionable sense? And may we not think that if so transcendently dreadful a doctrine had been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith, there would have been such forms of proposition, of circumlocution, if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or question a mere palpable absurdity?

Some intelligent and devout inquirers, unable to admit the terrific doctrine, and yet pressed by the strength of the Scripture language, have had recourse to a literal interpretation of the threatened destruction, the eternal death, as signifying *annihilation of existence*, after a more or less protracted penal infliction. Even this would be a prodigious relief; but it is an admission that the terms in question do mean something final, in an absolute sense. I have not directed much thought on this point; the grand object of interest being a negation of the perpetuity of misery. I have not been anxious for any satisfaction beyond that; though certainly one would wish to indulge the hope, founded on the divine attribute of infinite benevolence, that there will be a period somewhere in the endless futurity, when all God's sinning creatures will be restored by him to rectitude and happiness.

It often surprises me that the fearful doctrine sits, if I may so express it, so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it. Surrounded immediately by the multitudes of fellow mortals, and looking abroad on the present, and back on past state of the race, and regarding them as to the immense majority, as subjects of so direful destination, how can they have any calm enjoyment of life, how can they be cordially cheerful, how can they escape the incessant haunting of dismal ideas, darkening the economy in which their lot is cast? I remember suggesting to one of them such an image as this:—suppose the case that so many of the great surrounding population as he could not, even in a judgment of charity, believe to be Christians, that is, to be in a safe state for hereafter—suppose the case to be that he knew so many were all doomed to suffer, by penal infliction, a death by torture, in the most protracted agony, with what feelings would he look on the populous city, the swarming country, or even a crowded, mixed congregation? But what an infinitesimal trifle that would be in comparison with what he does believe in looking on these multitudes. How, then, can they bear the sight of the living world around them?

As to religious teachers; if the tremendous doctrine be true, surely it ought to be almost continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of terrible illustration; no remission of the alarm to thoughtless spirits. What! believe them in such inconceivably dreadful peril, and not multiply and aggravate the terrors to frighten them out of their stupor; deploring that all the horrifying representations in the power of thought and language to make, are immeasurably below the real urgency of the subject; and almost wishing that some appalling phenomenon of sight or sound might break in to make the impression that no words can make. If we saw a fellow mortal stepping heedlessly or daringly on the utmost verge of some dreadful precipice or gulf, a humane spectator would raise and continue a shout, a scream, to prevent him. How then can it comport with the duty of preachers to satisfy themselves with brief, occasional references to this awful topic, when the most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case?

There has been, in some quarters, what appeared to me a miserably fallacious way of talking, which affects to dissuade from

dwelling on such terrifying representations. They have said,—"These terrors tend only to harden the mind; approach the thoughtless beings rather, and almost exclusively, with the milder suavis, the gentle language of love." I cannot, of course, mean to say, that this also is not to be one of the expedients and of frequent application. But I do say, that to make this the main resource is not in consistency with the spirit of the Bible, in which the larger proportion of what is said of sinners and addressed to them, is plainly in a tone of menace and alarm. Strange if it had been otherwise, when a righteous Governor was speaking to a depraved, rebellious race. Also it is matter of fact and experience, that it is very far oftener by impressions on fear that men are actually awakened to flee from the wrath to come. Let any one recall what he has known of such awakenings. Dr. Watts, all mild and amiable as he was, and delighted to dwell on the congenial topics, says deliberately, that of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious, *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion; all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeals to fear. And this is all but universally the manner of the divine process of conversion.

A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries. When, besides, they have considered how strangely defective and feeble is the efficacy, to alarm and deter careless, irreligious minds, of the terrible doctrine itself notionally admitted by them, they have thought themselves the less required to propound one that so greatly qualifies the blackness of the prospect. They could not be unaware of the grievous truth of what is so strongly insisted on as an argument by the defenders of the tenet—that thoughtless and wicked men would be sure to seize on the mitigated doctrine to encourage themselves in their impenitence. But this is only the same perverse and fatal use that they make of the doctrine of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. If they will so abuse the truth, we cannot help it. But methinks even this fact tells against the doctrine in question. If the very nature of man, as created, every individual, by the sovereign Power, be in such desperate disorder, that there is no possibility of conversion and salvation except in the instances where that power interposes with a special and redeeming efficacy, how can we conceive that the main proportion of the race thus morally impotent (that is really and absolutely impotent), will be eternally punished for the inevitable result of this moral impotence? But this I have said before.

With all good wishes for the success of your studies and ministrations, I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

J. F.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

BY BROUGHAM.

As men will no longer suffer themselves to be led blindfold in ignorance, so will they no more yield to the vile principle of judging and treating their fellow creatures, not according to the intrinsic merit of their actions, but according to the accidental and involuntary coincidence of their opinions. The great truth has finally gone forth to the ends of the earth, that man shall no more render account to man for his belief, over which he has himself no control. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or to blame any one for that which he can no more change than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature. Henceforward, treating with entire respect those who conscientiously differ from ourselves, the only practical effect of the difference will be, to make us enlighten the ignorance, on one side or the other, from which it springs, by instructing them, if it be theirs; ourselves if it be our own; to the end that the only kind of unanimity may be produced which is desirable among rational beings—the agreement proceeding from full conviction, after the freest discussion.

A strong mind can proudly triumph over the oppression of pain, the vexations of disappointment, and the tyranny of fortune.—John Foster.

DANCING.

BY DR. CHANNING.

Dancing is an amusement, which has been discouraged in our country by many of the best people, and not without reason. Dancing is associated in their minds with balls; and this is one of the worst forms of social pleasure. The time consumed in preparation for a ball, the waste of thought upon it, the extravagance of dress, the late hours, the exhaustion of strength, the exposure of health, and the languor of the succeeding day,—these and other evils, connected with this amusement, are strong reasons for banishing it from the community. But dancing ought not therefore to be proscribed. On the contrary, balls should be discouraged for this among other reasons, that dancing, instead of being a rare pleasure, requiring elaborate preparation, may become an every-day amusement, and may mix with our common intercourse. This exercise is among the most healthful. The body as well as the mind feels its gladdening influence. No amusement seems more to have a foundation in our nature. The animation of youth overflows spontaneously in harmonious movements. The true idea of dancing entitles it to favor. Its end is, to realise perfect grace in motion; and who does not know, that a sense of the graceful is one of the higher faculties of our nature? It is to be desired, that dancing should become too common among us to be made the object of special preparation as in the ball; that members of the same family, when confined by unfavorable weather, should recur to it for exercise and exhilaration; that branches of the same family should cultivate in this way their occasional meetings; that it should fill up an hour in all the assemblages for relaxation, in which the young form a part. It is to be desired, that this accomplishment should be extended to the laboring classes of society, not only as an innocent pleasure, but as a means of improving the manners. Why shall not gracefulness be spread through the whole community? From the French nation, we learn that a degree of grace and refinement of manners may pervade all classes. The philanthropist and Christian must desire to break down the partition-walls between human beings in different conditions; and one means of doing this is, to remove the conscious awkwardness, which confinement to laborious occupations is apt to induce. An accomplishment, giving free and graceful movement, though a far weaker bond than intellectual and moral culture, still does something to bring those who partake it, near each other.

The Bible Christian.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY, 1847.

MONTREAL UNITARIAN CHURCH.

On the evening of Tuesday the 21 instant, a Soirée was held in the rooms of the basement story of the Unitarian Church of this city, for the benefit of the Sunday School in connection with the congregation. There were nearly two hundred persons present, many of them being Christian friends from other denominations. The school-room was connected with a saloon for refreshments, and the larger room adjoining served, for the time, all the purposes of a drawing room. The latter was tastefully decorated, and the former was provided with tables amply and elegantly furnished by the industry and liberality of the ladies.

After tea, the chair was taken by William Workman, Esq., and the meeting was addressed by the minister of the church and several other gentlemen. At eleven o'clock the assemblage separated highly gratified with the proceedings of the evening.

On Sunday evening, the 7th instant, a discourse was delivered, according to announcement, in the Unitarian Church of this city, on the present distressed condition of the people of Ireland. The church, on this occasion, was completely filled in every part—chairs and benches being placed in the aisles. The large congregation, which must have been composed of persons of various origins and denominations, seemed deeply interested in the subject presented to their notice, and listened throughout the discourse with a marked attention.

THE NEW PLANET.

In our last number we took occasion to introduce a notice of the new Planet recently discovered by M. LeVerrier. In speaking of its distance from the central body of our system, we find a mistake has been made. Having no other means of information on the subject available at the time, we were led to rely on a newspaper paragraph. We saw it stated there, that the newly found orb lay at three times the distance of Uranus from the Sun. This is incorrect. It lies at about double the distance of Uranus from the Sun; as every one will perceive from the credible statements now generally in circulation.

DR. PRIESTLEY.

The following paper relating to the life and character of this eminent man, was read at a late meeting of the Mutual Improvement Class in connection with the Montreal Unitarian Church. It is presented here in the hope that it will interest our readers as much as it did those who listened to its perusal.—The particulars of Dr. Priestley's life, &c. are abridged principally from his Memoirs, commenced by himself, and, after his death, continued and completed by his son.

"The life of Dr. Priestley has always appeared to me to furnish a beautiful and interesting portrait of the true Christian character; and perhaps my predilection for this subject may in some measure be prompted by the fact, that he was a faithful witness for, and bright exemplar of, that form of faith which we regard as primitive and uncorrupted Christianity. In religious inquiry, Dr. Priestley united the most child-like simplicity of character with the most manly intrepidity. He had a firm conviction that by Truth no man was ever injured; and he was always ready, "through good report and evil report," to follow wherever she should lead, without any regard to consequences. His other studies and pursuits, great and important as they were, were regarded as nothing in comparison with religion; and on this subject he delighted most to exercise the energies of his vigorous and inquiring mind. To the study of the Scriptures he brought a reverent and devout spirit, and defended its historic and prophetic authority with an earnestness and power seldom, if ever, equalled. And to this reverence for the Word of God may be attributed his bold and uncompromising opposition to what he believed to be the inventions and corruptions of men.

As a philosopher, Dr. Priestley, eminent as he was, was perfectly free from the slightest approach to vanity; and though distinguished as an inventor and discoverer, he never entertained any petty jealousy about prior discovery. The progress of knowledge was his sole object; and he was quite indifferent whether the discovery of new facts was made known by himself or by another.

As a metaphysician, he advanced doctrines which even to many of his best friends appeared startling, whilst from others he drew down upon himself an opposition often exhibiting itself in coarse vituperation and invective; but these were lost sight of by him, or were regarded as the idle wind, in his eager pursuit of right, and his devoted loyalty to the sacred cause of truth.

Few men have had to struggle for so many years with circumstances more straitened and precarious than Dr. Priestley; few men have ventured to attack so many and such inveterate prejudices respecting the prevalent religion of his country; few have had to encounter more able opponents in his literary career; or have been exposed to such incessant and vindictive obloquy from men of every description, in return for his unremitting exertions in the cause of truth; yet none have more uniformly proceeded with a single eye, regardless of consequences, to act as his convictions impelled him, and his conscience dictated.

Dr. Priestley, it has been said, was a man of perfect simplicity of character. He laid open his whole mind and purpose on all occasions, and always pursued avowed ends by direct means. In integrity and disinterestedness, in the strict performance of every social duty, no one could surpass him. His temper was easy and cheerful, his affections were kind, his dispositions friendly. Such was the sweetness of his manner in social intercourse, that many who entertained the strongest prejudices against him on account of his opinions, were converted into friends on a personal acquaintance.

A deeply-rooted conviction of the benevolence of that Being who overrules all events, and who, he said, "always took more care

of him than he did of himself," made him cheerful and happy under all the vicissitudes of life. Even the cruel persecutions to which he was subjected, could not shake his faith in the dignity and worth of human nature; and though his affection and friendship for the few friends who stood by him unshaken in the hours of trial, were ardent and sincere, his sympathies and his labours were for all mankind. The works of Priestley are the possession of the world,—they are part of the inheritance of each of us; but the glory of his life of simple holiness and upright integrity, may be claimed, in a peculiar sense, by Unitarians,—a sect which, small and despised as it has been, has ever been rich in disciples whose deeds have ennobled, whose intellects have enriched, and whose virtues have blessed mankind; and among the first of these claiming our admiration, gratitude, and reverence, stands the name of PRIESTLEY.

I proceed to give a brief sketch of the life of this eminent man, abridged from authentic sources; and shall conclude with a few remarks on his writings and on some of the more prominent and interesting traits of his character.

Dr. Priestley was born on the 13th of March, 1733, at Fieldhead, near Leeds, in Yorkshire. His father was engaged in the cloth manufacture, and was a Dissenter of the Calvinistic persuasion. Joseph was in his youth adopted by an aunt, a pious and excellent woman, by whom he was sent to several schools in the neighbourhood, and finally to the Dissenting Academy at Daventry, being designed for the ministry. "I was brought up," he says in his account of himself, "with sentiments of piety, but without bigotry; and having, from my earliest years, given much attention to the subject of religion, I was as much confirmed as I well could be in the principles of Calvinism,—all the books that came in my way having that tendency. Having read many books of experiences, and, in consequence, believing that a new birth, produced by the immediate agency of the Spirit of God, was necessary to salvation, and not being able to satisfy myself that I had experienced any thing of the kind, I felt occasionally such distress of mind as it is not in my power to describe, and which I still look back upon with horror. I imagine," he continues, "that even these conflicts of mind were not without their use, as they led me to think habitually of God and a future state. And though my feelings were then, no doubt, too full of terror, what remained of them was a deep reverence for divine things, and in time a pleasing satisfaction which can never be effaced, and, I hope, was strengthened as I advanced in life, and acquired more rational notions of religion. The remembrance, however, of what I sometimes felt in that state of ignorance and darkness, gives me a peculiar sense of the value of rational principles of religion."

At Daventry he spent three years, during which his acute and vigorous mind was expanding in free inquiry and diversified pursuits. Of the Academy in this place, founded by the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, he says: "In my time, the Academy was in a state peculiarly favourable to the serious pursuits of truth, as the students were about equally divided upon every question of much importance, in consequence of which all the topics of theological orthodoxy and heresy were the subject of continual discussion. Our tutors also were of different opinions: Dr. Ashworth taking the orthodox side of every question; and Mr. Clark, the sub-tutor, that of heresy, though always with the greatest modesty. The general plan of our studies, which may be seen in Dr. Doddridge's published lectures, was exceedingly favourable to free enquiry, as we were referred to authors on both sides of every question, and were even required to give an account of them. In this situation, I saw reason to embrace what is generally called the heterodox side of almost every question." On quitting the Academy, he accepted a situation to officiate as minister to a small Presbyterian congregation at Needham, in Suffolk, the salary promised him being £40 per annum, but the most that he received from them was £30, whilst the expense of his board exceeded £20. Notwithstanding this, everything for a while appeared promising, and he was happy in the success of his schemes for promoting the interests of religion in the place; but having commenced a course of lectures on the theory of religion, which he had composed whilst at the Academy, he found that when he came to treat of the *Unity of God* merely as an article of faith, several of his audience were attentive to nothing else but the soundness of his faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. As he made no secret of his real opinions, it was soon found that he was an Arian. From the time of this discovery, his hearers fell off apace, especially as the old minister to whom he succeeded took a decided part against him; and notwithstanding the principal families continued with him, his salary fell

far short of £30 per annum. "I was barely able," he says, "with the greatest economy, to keep out of debt (though this I always made a point of doing at all events); and had it not been for Dr. Benson and Dr. Kippis, I do not believe that I could have subsisted. I shall always remember their kindness to me at a time when I stood so much in need of it." At Needham, Dr. Priestley felt the effects of a humble situation, and the want of popular talents (owing principally to an impediment in his speech). "Even my next neighbour," he says, "whose sentiments were as free as my own, and known to be so, declined making exchanges with me, because the more genteel part of his hearers always absented themselves when they heard I was to preach for him. But visiting that country some years afterwards, when I had raised myself to some degree of notice in the world, and being invited to preach in that very pulpit, the same people crowded to hear me, and they professed to admire one of the same discourses they had formerly despised."

After a residence of three years at Needham, Dr. Priestley accepted the charge of a congregation at Nantwich, in Cheshire, to which he joined a school. In the business of education he was indefatigable; and here his reputation as a man of varied knowledge and active enquiry began to extend itself. In 1761, after a residence of three years at Nantwich, he was invited by the trustees of the Dissenting Academy at Warrington to occupy the post of tutor in the languages. In this situation he continued six years, and in the second year he married a daughter of Mr. Wilkinson, an ironmaster, near Wrexham, in Wales. This proved a very suitable and happy connexion, his wife being, to use his own words descriptive of her, "a woman of an excellent understanding, much improved by reading, of great fortitude and strength of mind, and of a temper in the highest degree affectionate and generous,—feeling strongly for others, and little for herself." At Warrington, Dr. Priestley obtained the title of Doctor of Laws from the University of Edinburgh; and the situation he held, afforded him the advantages of cultivating an extensive acquaintance with books and with men of literary eminence. Here he published his *History of Electricity*, a work undertaken at the recommendation of Dr. Franklin, Dr. Watson, and Dr. Price (to all of whom he had been introduced, whilst on a visit, a short time before, in London). This was the first fruits of that inventive and sagacious spirit by which he afterwards rendered himself so celebrated in the walk of natural philosophy. It was several times reprinted, was translated into foreign languages, and procured for him admission into the Royal Society. This work was undertaken without the least idea of doing any thing more than writing a distinct and methodical account of all that had been done by others. Having, however, a pretty good machine, he was led to endeavour to ascertain several facts which were disputed; and this led him, by degrees, into a large field of original experiments.

After being for six years at Warrington, most laboriously employed for nothing more than a bare subsistence, he accepted an invitation to take charge of the congregation of Mill-Hill Chapel, Leeds. The liberality of the persons composing it, and his own predilection for the Christian ministry, rendered this a very agreeable situation to him; and here he resumed with his characteristic ardour, his theological studies. Besides the *Theological Repository*—a periodical publication—his works on various questions connected with religion were numerous, and evidenced the zeal with which he was inspired. But his labours were not confined to the closet: he was exceedingly assiduous in his pastoral duties; and the instruction of the young in the principles of religion, afforded him peculiar pleasure. It was at Leeds that his attention was first excited, in consequence of his vicinity to a public brewery, to the properties of fixed air, which he found ready made in the process of fermentation, and his experiments led him so far as to contrive a simple apparatus for impregnating water with it, and he was enabled to make other interesting discoveries connected with the doctrine of air. At this time, he says, he had very little knowledge of chemistry; and to this circumstance he attributes in some measure the originality of the experiments which produced these subsequent discoveries that rendered him so celebrated, since otherwise he might probably have followed some beaten track. He subsequently published the "History of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light, and Colours," which, being a work of much labour and expense, he published by subscription. While at Leeds, a proposal was made to him to accompany Capt. Cook in his second voyage to the South Seas; and as the terms were very advantageous, he consented to it,—the

heads of his congregation agreeing to keep an assistant to supply his place during his absence; but he was subsequently informed that he was objected to by some clergymen on the Board of Longitude, on account of his religious principles.

About this time, whilst on a visit to Archdeacon Blackburne, at Richmond, commenced his intimacy with the Rev. Theophilus Lindsay, the Rector of Catterick,— "an intimacy," says Dr. Priestley, "which has been the source of more real satisfaction to me than any other circumstances in my whole life. Mr. Lindsay," he adds, "soon discovered to me that he was uneasy in his situation. At first I was not forward to encourage him in it, but rather advised him to make what alteration he thought proper in the offices of the Church, and leave it to his superiors to dismiss him if they chose. But his better judgment, and greater fortitude, led him to give up all connection with the Established Church, of his own accord. This took place about the time of my leaving Leeds; and it was not until long after this, that I was apprized of all the difficulties he had to struggle with, before he could accomplish his purpose. But the opposition made to it by his nearest friends, and those who might have been expected to approve of the step that he took, and to have endeavoured to make it easy to him, was one of the greatest. Notwithstanding this, he left Catterick, where he had lived in alluence, idolized by his parish, and went to London without any certain prospect, where he lived in two rooms on a ground floor; until, by the assistance of his friends, he was able to pay for the use of the upper apartments, which the state of his health rendered necessary. In this humble situation have I passed some of the most pleasing hours of my life, when, in consequence of living with Lord Shelburne, I spent my winters in London. On this occasion it was that my intimacy with Mr. Lindsay was much improved; and an entire concurrence in everything that we thought to be for the interest of Christianity, gave fresh warmth to our friendship. To his society I owe much of my zeal for the doctrine of the divine Unity, for which he made so great sacrifices, and in the defence of which he so much distinguished himself as to occasion a new era in the history of religion in this country. As we became more intimate, confiding in his better taste and judgment, and also in that of Mrs. Lindsay, a woman of the same spirit and views, and in all respects a help-meet for him, I never chose to publish any thing of moment relating to theology without consulting him; and hardly ever ventured to insert anything that they disapproved, being sensible that my disposition led to precipitancy, to which their coolness was a seasonable check."

[TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.]

(From the New York Christian Inquirer.)
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

The Association held its annual meeting at the Library of the Church of the Divine Unity, on Monday evening, 11th January, the President, Z. Cook, Esq., in the chair.

Rev. Mr. Robins, of Boston, opened the meeting with prayer, and the Annual Report of the Association was then read by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Richard Warren, Esq.

Rev. Mr. Bellows said that, though disabled by a severe cold, he could not allow the report to pass in silence, lest the very walls should cry out. He praised its directness, its business-like tone, its unvarnished truthfulness; and proceeded to disclaim for the clergy any merit in what had been already accomplished by the Association. He rejoiced that the work had been done by laymen; laymen had laid the foundations; laymen were building the walls of the Institution. As to what had been done, it might seem small, in comparison with what is accomplished where numerical force is greater; but it is, nevertheless, of great importance. It requires but a spark of living fire, to set off a great train. Unitarianism is making progress, indirectly as well as directly. It is advancing not only by the express teachings of the pulpit, but by the continual droppings of the popular literature. There is a great deal of latent Unitarianism; our business is to develop it. Public sentiment is waiting to run in the channel which we and we only can prepare for it. Means, though small, if used with the right spirit, will accomplish great results. Much has already been done. Men's minds are shaking off the trammels which they have learned to feel so degrading. They will think for themselves, and they are ready to accept a simple faith as soon as it is offered. It is our duty to labour heart and soul that it may be offered to all.

Mr. Cook expressed himself, in behalf of the Directors, much pleased with the recep-

tion of the report, and stated that the paper had been prepared solely by the gentleman who presented it, without a suggestion on the part of the Directors.

Mr. Allen then remarked upon the fact that there were generally supposed to be but two Unitarian societies in this city; but that there were in reality ten which were truly Unitarian, as denying the fundamental tenets of the Calvinistic theology, especially the doctrine of the Trinity. Of these, two are of the Christian denomination, four Universalists, two Hicksite Friends, and two of our own. In the State there are 500 societies who hold the strict Unity of God; in the United States 3,000. All these we ought to hail as brethren. They hold the peculiar distinctive faith, on account of which men cast out our names as evil; and we should give them the right hand of fellowship, which is elsewhere denied to them and to us. He was glad that our brotherhood with these sects was alluded to in the Report.

Mr. Warren now offered a resolution, which he said was offered twenty years ago at Boston, but would be equally appropriate now; and he would read it, hoping some gentleman present would make it the ground of some remarks. The resolution was as follows:—

Resolved, That the opportunities daily presenting themselves for the spread of Unitarian truth, call for an increase of teachers, and a more strenuous effort on the part of its friends.

The Rev. Mr. Robins, of Boston, came to sympathize with New York, but he believed he should go away sympathizing with Boston. He came as a stranger might; to look on, not intending to say a word; but he felt impelled to rise, to give his testimony of approbation to what had been done, and to manifest his sympathy in this effort to spread the knowledge of "the faith once delivered to the saints." Though a stranger, he felt himself among brethren and friends. He concluded his remarks by exhorting the workmen who had begun so admirably to keep the ploughshare bright in the field of God, trusting Him to prepare the soil for the seed, and bring it to a glorious harvest.

Mr. Cook, at the close of the proceedings, announced that the Association had obtained from the Legislature an act of incorporation, which was read and accepted; and after a few business resolutions, the meeting adjourned.

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. 857.

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.

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

HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE TRINITY; showing the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Doctrine, with Elucidatory Engravings. By the Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D., of Manchester, England.

TWELVE LECTURES in Illustration and Defence of Christian Unitarianism. By the Rev. J. Scott Porter, Colleague Pastor of the First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, Ireland.

CONTENTS:

- 1.—Unitarianism: What it is, and what it is not.
- 2.—Unitarianism the Faith of the Old Testament.
- 3.—Unitarianism the Faith of our Lord Jesus Ch.
- 4 & 5.—Unitarianism the Faith of the Apostles.
- 6.—Unitarianism the Faith of the Primitive Ch.
- 7.—Unitarianism a Rational Faith.
- 8.—Unitarianism a Devotional Faith.
- 9.—Unitarianism a Benevolent Faith.
- 10.—Unitarianism a Holy Faith.
- 11.—Unitarianism a Consolatory Faith.
- 12.—Unitarianism a Progressive Faith.

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.

Montreal, December, 1846.

Poetry.

GOOD BYE, PROUD WORLD.

BY R. W. EMERSON.

Good bye, proud world, I'm going home,
Thou'rt not my friend, and I'm not thine;
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam,
But now, proud world, I'm going home.

Good bye to Flattery's fawning face,
To Grandeur, with his wise grimace,
To upstart Wealth's averted eye,
To supple Office low and high,
To crowded halls, to court, and street,
To frozen hearts, and hasting feet,
To those who go, and those who come,
Good bye, proud world, I'm going home.

I'm going to my own hearth-stone
Bosomed in you green hills, alone,
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green the live long day
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
For what are they all in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet.

SILENCE.

Let any true man go into silence; strip himself of all pretence, and selfishness, and sensuality and sluggishness of soul; lift off thought after thought, passion after passion, till he reaches the inmost deep of all; remember how short a time, and he was not at all; how short a time again, and he will not be here; open his window and look upon the night, how still its breath, how solemn its march, how deep its perspective, how ancient its forms of light; and think how little he knows except the perpetuity of God, and the mysteriousness of life; and it will be strange if he does not feel the Eternal Presence as close upon his soul, as the breeze upon his brow; if he does not say, "O Lord, thou art ever near as this, and have I not known thee?"—if the true proportions and the genuine spirit of life do not open on his heart with infinite clearness, and show him the littleness of his temptations, and the grandeur of his trust. He is ashamed to have found weariness in toil so light, and tears where there was no trial to the brave. He discovers with astonishment how small the dust that has blinded him, and from the height of a quiet and holy love, looks down with incredulous sorrow on the jealousies, and fears, and irritations, that have vexed his life. A mighty wind of Resolution sets in strong upon him and freshens the whole atmosphere of his soul; sweeping down before it the light flakes of difficulty, till they vanish like the snow upon the sea. He is imprisoned no more in a small compartment of time, but belongs to an eternity which is now and here. The isolation of his separate spirit passes away; and with the countless multitude of souls akin to God, he is but as a wave of His unbounded deep. He is at one with Heaven, and hath found the secret place of the Almighty.

All great things are born of silence. The fury indeed of destructive passion may start up in the hot conflict of life, and go forth with tumultuous desolation. But all beneficent and creative power gathers itself together in silence, ere it issues out in might. Force itself indeed is naturally silent, and only makes itself heard, if at all, when it strikes upon obstructions to bear them away as it returns to equilibrium again. The very hurricane that roars over land and ocean, flits noiselessly through spaces where nothing meets it. The blessed sunshine says nothing, as it warms the vernal earth, tempts out the tender grass, and decks the field and forest in their glory. Silence came before creation, and the heavens were spread with a word. Christ was born at dead of night; and though there has been no power like his, "he did not strive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the streets." Nowhere can you find any beautiful work, any noble design, any durable endeavor, that was not matured in long and patient silence, ere it spake out in its accomplishment. There it is that we ac-

cumulate the inward power which we distribute and spend in action; put the smallest duty before us in dignified and holy aspects; and reduce the merest hardships beneath the foot of our self-denial. There it is that the soul, enlarging all its dimensions at once, acquires a greater and more vigorous being, and gathers up its collective forces to bear down upon the piece-meal difficulties of life, and scatter them to dust. There alone can we enter into that spirit of self-abandonment, by which we take up the cross of duty, however heavy, with feet however worn and bleeding they may be. And thither shall we return again, only into higher peace and more triumphant power, when the labor is over and the victory won, and we are called by Death into God's loftiest watch-tower of Contemplation.—James Martineau.

THE NAME OF 'UNITARIAN.'

Most controversies would be at an end, if the terms used could be defined accurately, and to the satisfaction of both parties engaged. Many of our own body object to the retention of the name of Unitarian. But we must be called by some title to distinguish us from others, when the faith we hold is spoken of, and the word Unitarian is as simple, significant, and modest, as any that can be devised. If we call ourselves Christians, some may object that we virtually exclude others from that beautiful name, by appropriating to ourselves, as the "evangelical" denominations tacitly deny that those, not thus called, are called evangelical or according to the Gospel. If, too, we call ourselves Christians, we confound ourselves with a large and growing denomination already known by that title, and as much contradistinguished also from other sects by that term, as by any other sectarian name that was ever employed; showing the impossibility of wholly avoiding sectarianism, if we have any distinct theology of our own.

1. The Unitarian, according to Worcester's Dictionary, is "an Anti-Trinitarian; one who allows divinity (deity) to God the Father alone." The name therefore is profoundly significant of one of the greatest distinctions that ever was made in human faith and the science of theology, and is by no means that barren, negative, and equivocal term, which some even of our friends represent it.

2. The term in its secondary sense, may mean that body of Liberal Christians, which entertains no rigid identity of opinion, but holds to oneness of spirit in the Gospel faith, and which in that generous unity of affection and aspiration, not of creed, arrives at the genuine fellowship of the disciples of Christ; a fellowship where each one respects his own sincere convictions too much to be willing to coerce or punish the sincere convictions of others; a fellowship where individuals, with their free and independent and natural characteristics, without being cut down to one dead uniformity, enjoy the union of living hearts, attuned to tolerate and love one another, not the assent of minds broken and schooled to think alike.

3. Far be it from us to encourage the bigotry and intolerance of sectarianism, but it is plain that necessity compels every thing to have its name, every party and sect and man to have his designation, for only thus can one person, or set of opinions, or faith, escape being confounded with another. If we are in fact Unitarians, why do we object to being thus called? Is it because it is an odious name? Then do we hesitate to be classed with some of the holiest and truest men of history, because they bore an unpopular title. Is it because the word does not perfectly describe our faith? What term does precisely suit any set of doctrines? It is after all only an approximation to the truth. We are obliged in this world to deal with wholes, not with halves. If we call ourselves by a new name, we but make a new sect, and increase the difficulties we profess to deprecate. And after all, how little it matters what we are called, in comparison with what we are.

THE TERM 'EVANGELICAL.'

This signifies literally, "according to the Gospel"; from *Evangelion*, Gospel. It is used to designate the true faith in distinction from heresy, and the orthodox from the heterodox party. But its modern application is singularly forced, and inappropriate and presuming. All sects hold to the Gospel; the questions on which they divide are, What is the Gospel? what does it teach? what require? They are questions of interpretation, inference.

Again; if by "evangelical" is meant, according to the Gospel, or the Gospels, the term we conceive to be wholly misapplied. For the systems of Trinitarianism and Calvinism, thus called, quote by far the majority of their proof texts from the Epistles of the New Testament, not from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They would therefore much more properly be termed "epistolical" than "evangelical." Not the plain

and simple teachings of Christ, but the letters of Paul, "hard to be understood," according to the confession of one of his brother apostles—and if hard then, how much harder now!—constitute the basis of the Theology now predominant in the Greek, the Roman Catholic, and the Trinitarian and Calvinistic Protestant Churches.

MIRACLES.

There is a confusion in some minds about miracles. An undue importance has been attached to the difference between what is called *natural*, and what we term *supernatural*. The great question is, has the world a plan? Had it an author? Is there a God, whose power is resistless, and whose agency is universal? If there be, the importance of that difference is much diminished, or rather, the nature of that difference is more distinctly ascertained. The reluctance of some to admit such a thing as a miracle, and the horrors of others at those who doubt miracles, are alike exaggerated. They both seem to ascribe an independent and inherent force to the laws of nature. That expression continually misleads. With the admission of a providential plan, the phrase *law of nature* can only mean, the uniformity of exertion of the Divine agency. The supernatural is, then, distinguished from the natural, not by its greater difficulty of accomplishment, but simply by its rareness. The natural and the supernatural are alike God's acts, only the one is common, the other uncommon; but both rational and credible; as both may be portions of a common plan, directed to a common object. It is a bad definition of a miracle, that it violates a law of nature. What we call laws of nature, are of different orders in an ascending scale, and each liable to an apparent suspension, by the interposition of that which is above it. The principles of mechanical action are often suspended by coming in contact with those of chemical combination, as those of chemical combination are, where the principle of vitality is introduced. There is yet a higher set of laws, those of mind, interfering with and modifying all below; and above these, in the universal plan, are moral principles, which may necessitate still more comprehensive and striking deviations, but which equally claim to be included in that great code which shall comprise the laws of nature. In this view *resurrection* may be as much in the order of nature, and be as improperly called, the violation of a law, as birth or death, or even the commonest instance of cause and effect in a mechanical operation. Could all the miracles of the Old and the New Testament be accounted for naturally, i.e., could they be assigned to a lower class of the laws of nature, rather than to the highest, they would still demonstrate plan, divine plan; and it would therefore still be true that Moses had his mission to deliver Israel, and Christ to redeem the world.—W. J. Fox.

SENTIMENTAL AND RELIGIOUS NOVELS.

(From Brownson's Review.)

"The age in which we live is a sentimental age, and sentimentalism is the deadliest enemy to true piety, and to all real strength or worth of character. It enervates the soul, subverts the judgment, and lays the heart open to every temptation. The staple literature of our times, the staple literature of our youth of both sexes, is sentimental novels and love-tales, and the effect is manifest in the diseased state of the public mind, and in the growing effeminacy of character and depravation of morals. Nature herself has made ample provision for the passion and the sentiment of love, and they cannot be excited to an unnatural activity by the charms of imagination and the magic of poetry, without involving the most grave consequences. The early Christians chanted the praises of virginity, and employed their imagination and poetry to win souls to God not to madden two young persons with a blind and often a fatal passion for each other, and we do not well in departing from their example.

"All books which seek the sources of their interest in the passion or sentiment of love are to be distrusted, and so indeed are all which, no matter in what degree, foster a sentimental tendency. The more delicate and refined the sentimentality, and the more apparently innocent and pure it may be, the more really dangerous it is. Works which are grossly sensual disgust all in whom corruption has not already commenced; not works which studiously avoid every indelicate expression or allusion, which seem to breathe an air of purity itself, excite no alarm, are read by the innocent and confiding, insinuate a fatal poison before it is suspected, and create a tone and temper of mind and heart which pave the way for corruption. Corruption generally, if not always, begins in the sentiments, and in sentiments which in themselves are free from blame, and which apparently cannot be too strong or active. The Devil, when he would seduce

us, comes, usually disguised as an angel of light. If he came in his own shape, in his real character, we should at once recognize and resist him; but coming disguised under the appearance of something which is held to be innocent and worthy to be encouraged, he is able to destroy the equilibrium of the character, to produce a morbid state of the affections, and to take from us all power to resist in the hour of trial.

We speak not, of course, against genuine warmth of heart, real tenderness of feeling, and strength of affection. Nay, we are pleading their cause. The sickly refinement, the morbid sentimentality, which the popular literature of the day has such a direct tendency to foster, is no less fatal to them than to piety and charity. Your inveterate novel-reader cannot love, in any worthy sense of the term. Her heart is *blase* before she is out of her teens. Her whole being, body and soul, heart and mind, inside and out, from top to bottom, is diseased, full of wounds and putrifying sores. She has no health, no soundness, no strength to bear even the application of a remedy. She may talk charmingly, vent much exquisite sentiment, but if you want to find much warmth of heart, genuine affection, or a noble and disinterested deed, go not near her. It is this morbid sensibility, this enervating and corrupting sentimentality, which the popular literature of the day encourages, that we oppose, and every enlightened censor of morals does and must oppose."

THE PRESS.

Douglas Jerrold says the power of the press is as boundless as that of society. It reaches the throne; it is enclosed in the cottage. It can pull down injustice, however lofty, and raise up lowliness, however deep. It castigates crimes, which the law can only punish, without repressing them. Wherever an eye can see or a hand can write, there is the press. Persons in tribulation rely on it for redress, and they feel sure that wrong will not go unpunished if it known to the journals. Like light, it penetrates into every nook and corner of society, and carries health and healing on its beams. It nips rising abuses in the bud. It stops the tide of tyranny when setting in full flood. It derives its vast power from the principle of its being. Seeking out truth and representing reason, it concentrates on one point the whole moral power of society, and persuades and governs without violence, by the mere knowledge that the physical power of society is always ready to vindicate the right. As it comes into operation, the course of society becomes uniform and equal, and as it is obtained without those convulsions and rebellions by which a rude, unlettered people make their will known.

THE FALLEN BROTHER.

A man possesses an extremely low and grovelling mind, who rejoices at the downfall of another. A noble heart, instead of denouncing, as a consummate scoundrel, one who has erred, will throw around him the mantle of charity and the arms of love, and labour to bring him back to duty and to God. We are not our own keepers. Who knows when we shall so far forget ourselves as to put forth a right hand and sin? Heaven keep us in the narrow path. But if we should fall, where would be the end of our course, if in every face we saw a frown, and on every brow we read revenge? Deeper and deeper would we descend in the path of infamy; when, if a different course were pursued, and a different spirit were manifested towards us, we might have stayed our career of sin, and died an upright and honest man.

Deal gently with those who stray. Draw them back by love and persuasion. A kiss is worth a thousand kicks. A kind word is more valuable to the lost than a mine of gold. Think of this, and be on your guard, ye who would chase to the confines of the grave an erring brother.—Portland Tribune.

A GOOD CHARACTER.—A good character is to a young man what a firm foundation is to the artist who proposes to erect a building on it; he can build with safety, and all who behold it will have confidence in its solidity; a helping hand will never be wanted. But let a single part of this be defective, and you go at hazard, amidst doubting and distrust, and ten to one it will tumble down at last, and mingle all that was built on it in ruin. Without a good character, poverty is a curse; with it, it is scarcely an evil. Happiness cannot exist where good character is not. All that is bright in the hopes of youth, all that is calm and blissful in the vale of tears, centres in and is derived from a good character. Therefore, acquire this as the first and most valuable.

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