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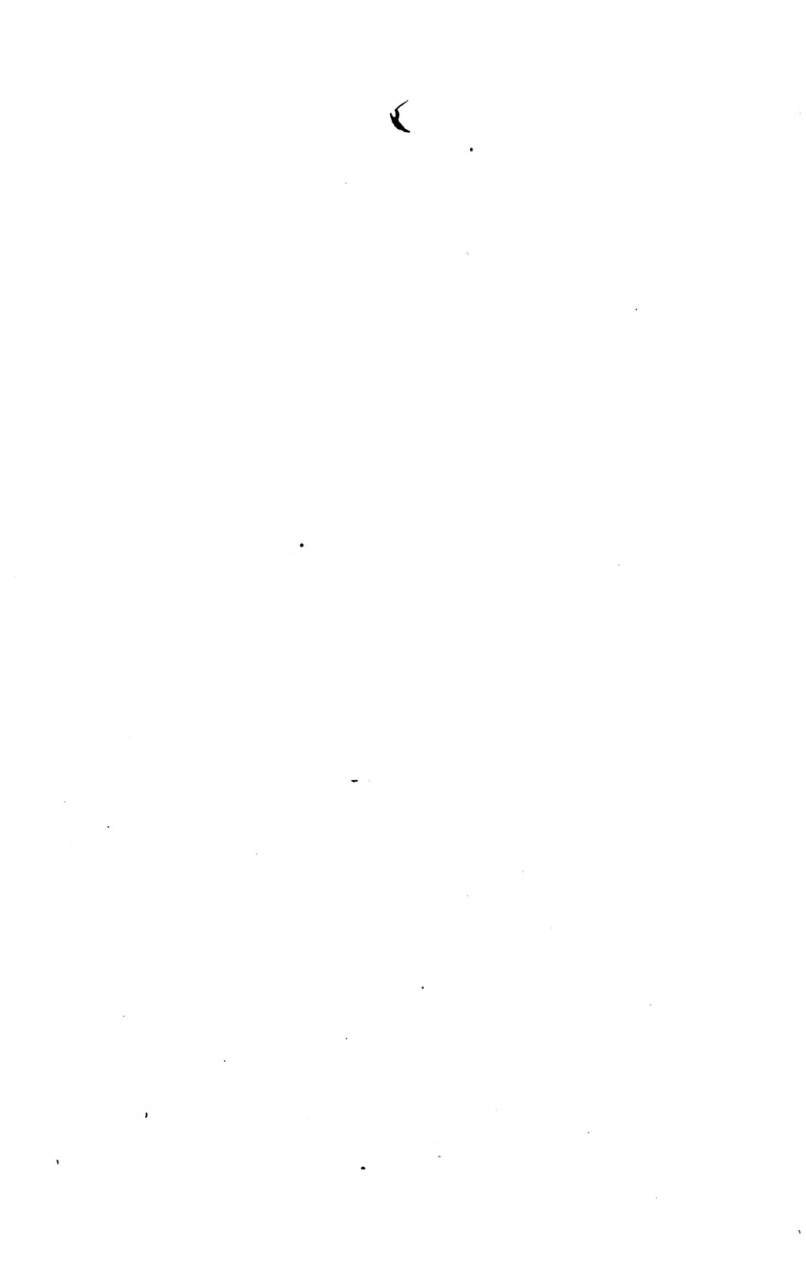
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THE
LITERARY ATTRACTIONS

OF

THE BIBLE ;

OR

A PLEA FOR THE WORD OF GOD, CONSIDERED
AS A CLASSIC.

BY

LE ROY J. HALSEY, D. D.

Thy testimonies are wonderful.

PSALMIST.

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**W. H. TINSON, STEREOTYPEN.**

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P R E F A C E .



THE topics presented in the several chapters of this volume, though apparently disconnected, have all been selected and discussed with one great end constantly in view; and that is to make them bear, as an unbroken and cumulative argument, on the superhuman and consequently Divine character of the Bible. This is the thought that underlies the whole arrangement and gives it unity. This main design, though running through a wide range of illustration, will be found constantly recurring, especially at the end of the chapters, and most of all in the last chapter, which was first in the order of conception and led to the composition of all the rest.

In contemplating the adorable person of Immanuel, there is a human as well as a Divine side to the picture. So also is it with the book of God. It has a human and a Divine side. There is a higher, and there is a lower point of view. It is the aim of the present work to occupy only this lower place, and from it to contemplate the human side exclusively. But it has been with an impression ever present to the writer's mind and growing to the end, that it is impossible to look long even

upon the human, without seeing the bright beams of the Divine, streaming through from the other side. Like the manhood in Immanuel's person, humanity here appears in a mood so original, and so far above the usual style of man, that it seems itself a demonstration of Divinity.

Of course nothing new can now be offered or attempted on such a theme. But it is hoped that the easy argument, if the writer may venture to call it such, which runs through these chapters, will at least arrest the attention of some who might be repelled by more difficult, and formal discussions of the evidence for the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Perhaps the best evidence, after all, is to let the Bible speak for itself. It is a great point gained, when we can get what is in the Bible fairly before the minds of men. But there is more in it than many think; much more than any casual reader is ever aware of. And how is the Bible to speak for itself to those who will not patiently read it? Other books must speak for it, and tell what it contains.

The object of these pages is to tell, at least in part, what it contains; to gain the eye of those, who, under an impression that there is nothing in the Bible but religion, really do not know how much there is in it; to bring out to their view some of its many treasures; and to present them in such a way that they shall desire to see more; and so be attracted to the book itself. And if, from this lower point of view, and from this human side, the reader should receive any favorable impression of its truth, what might he not expect to find, should

he but ascend to the higher and holier ground? What
but the luminous strokes of God's own finger!

“ On every line.

Marked with the seals of high Divinity

On every leaf bedewed with drops

Of love Divine, and with the eternal heraldry

And signature of God Almighty stamped

From first to last.”

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ATTRACTIVEIONS OF THE BIBLE.



CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BIBLE AS A CLASSICAL BOOK.

Introductory—The Bible as a Classic—The Bible adapted to Childhood—The Bible in the School and College—The Bible in our English version—The Bible in the four great Classic Tongues—The Bible as related to the State and its Schools—The Bible the Palladium of American Institutions—The Bible and the Church of Rome—Concluding remarks.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

IN the following pages, addressed mainly, though not exclusively, to our educated youth, it is proposed to present an outline of what may be called the Incidental Attractions of the Bible ; or, in other words, to set forth its claims both as a classic, and as a book of general education. As a book of religion, around which cluster all our hopes of immortality, the Bible has merits of the very highest order ; and these, with every serious mind, will be, as they ever ought to be, its greatest attractions. But, aside from the religion which it reveals to us, and the good news of salvation which it brings us, the Bible has other attractions.

It is the book of our learning, not less than our religion ; the basis of our civilization, not less than our salvation. It is the charter of our rights and liberties, as truly as it is the oracle of our faith, the manual of our devotions, and the anchor of our hopes. It has moulded into shape, and it has quickened into life, the whole body of our secular learning, as well as our theology. It has breathed its own vital spirit into all our science, literature, legislation, philosophy, social and political institutions. It has led the van of ancient and of modern civilization in its march around the globe. It has been the great well-spring of living water, out of which have issued all the glad streams of intellectual and moral health, that are now found flowing in every civilized land beneath the sun. Thus far, it has been the great educator and civilizer of man ; and it is, doubtless, destined to be his greatest educator in all time to come, his most effective civilizer in every dark abode of heathenism throughout the world.

But, whilst it is chiefly as a book of religion, and especially of religious education, that the Bible has spread civilization among the nations ; still it is true, that regarded simply as a book of learning, of taste and genius, of history and eloquence, it has exerted an influence which cannot be too highly estimated. As such, it has claims which commend themselves to every cultivated understanding. Independently of all its higher glories—the knowledge which it gives us of the way to heaven, and the hope with which it inspires us of a blessed immortality—there are attractions which may be felt and appreciated even by the irreligious and the worldly-minded. And these, it is our purpose to group together in one distinct and connected view.

Our object will be to speak of the book of God, as a pro-

duction of inspired genius and classic taste ; to illustrate the sublimity of its thoughts, the beauty of its diction, the wide compass of its history, the vast variety of its biography, and the infinite range of its imagination ; to reveal something of its immeasurable wealth, as a field of knowledge, a mine of wisdom, a model of eloquence, a master-piece of poesy, a fountain of influence, a text-book of instruction ; and thus to render it, so far as we shall be able, attractive to all, especially to the young. In other words, we propose to walk around about Jerusalem, to mark well her bulwarks, to admire her beauty, to gaze upon the outer glories of her temple.

As ancient Israel was the glory of all the earth, Jerusalem the glory of Israel, and her temple the glory of Jerusalem, even so is the Bible now to Christianity, and to the world. It is the most glorious, outward, and visible heritage, which has come down from the past. It stands to the Christian and to the Church, as the temple did to the Jew. It is the throne of power. It is the symbol of all greatness. It is the shrine of all good. It is the centre of universal attraction. It is the radiating point of all blessed influences. It contains all the holy records. Within it are found the patterns of things in the heavens—the Ark, the Testimony, the Mercy-Seat, the Manna and the Budding Rod, the Cherubim shadowing with wings, and the Shekinah.

But it is not to gaze upon any of these glories of the inner sanctuary that we are now come. It is to stand before the beautiful gate of this mount of vision ; to look around upon all the wonderful adornments of this hill of the Lord, the gold, the silver, the marble and the precious stones, with that kind of enthusiasm which the traveller feels upon the Athenian Acropolis, or the Roman Capitoline. The Bible

is our mount of vision, and its outstanding beauties now attract our view.

It is thought that these characteristics of the Bible may be illustrated by a comparison with other books, by a reference to passing events, by a description of ancient scenes in our current phraseology ; that they may be presented in a somewhat modern popular dress, which, while it shall not offend the taste of the scholar on the one hand, nor the piety of the Christian on the other, may attract the attention of our educated youth ; and thus become the means of leading them to a better acquaintance with this Divine book. At all events, such is our hope. For in these days of fiction, when the world is so easily turned upside down by every new writer of tales ; when history philosophy, and even theology, stoop to the writing of a two-volume novel as their best achievement ; when there are so many books, leading our youth away from the Bible, and creating a distaste for its sacred, truth-loving pages—whatever may be said, be it ever so little, to create a better taste, and lead them back to this book of books, will be so much gained for the cause of sound learning amongst us.

There are many persons who will read a page or chapter, attracted by the sight of some well-known historical name, or some familiar line of poetry, who would otherwise pass it by unread. In like manner, may we not hope, that some of our young friends, allured by a chance illustration from history, or allusion to current events, or comparison of the sacred and profane writers, or favorite quotation from the poets, or, it may be, mere suggestion that there is more science in this venerable book than they had ever given it credit for, will be led thus to peruse it for themselves ; to peruse it with growing interest, until, advancing from the less to the greater, and from the outer to

the inner sanctuary, they find for themselves that other attraction, which is its chief glory—even a Saviour who is God over all blessed forever. Such, at least, is our desire.

In every generation, prejudice has put the same question respecting this book, which was asked respecting the Master himself at the beginning: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And to every sincere, though prejudiced Nathaniel, we cannot do better than to answer in the words of Nathaniel's friend: "Come and see." If you will come and see, if you will read and examine the book for yourselves, our office shall be to act as an humble guide, who, having gone over the ground before, would tell what scenes of beauty and sublimity, and more than earthly glory, we have found in this rich land. We will act the part of Philip, and show to you what others have shown to us.

Still further, it shall be our aim to avoid everything of a controversial and sectarian character. We wish to speak as a friend of the Bible; and as such, to address all to whom the Bible is addressed. Nothing gives us a more heart-felt pleasure, than to come out, as often as we can, from the inclosures of denominational peculiarities, and stand in the wide, open field of our common Christianity. In exhibiting the attractions of the book of God, we rejoice that it is our privilege to speak in such a way, that all the friends of evangelical truth may feel at home with us, saying: This, too, is our book, this is our heritage forever, the lamp of our feet, the guide of our youth. We may all look upon the Bible as we look upon the broad domain of nature, or upon the blue heavens above. It is common property. It is all ours. It all belongs to each of us, because our Father made it. We breathe a common air; we gaze upon the same loveliness; the same landscape smiles in beauty at our

feet ; the same heavens encompass us ; in the Bible, as in the book of nature, we are all at home, for God, our Father, is over all, and in all. When we read other books, there is a limit to our view—a narrow boundary, a low circumscribed horizon, which we must not pass. But when we open the Bible, it is with a feeling that a world is all before us, the skies are all bright and the land is all free.

“No pent up Utica contracts our powers,
But the whole boundless continent is ours.”

It is with this enlarged spirit of liberality, and of Christian brotherhood, fostered by the book which we advocate, that we now undertake to address as many of our fellow-Christians and fellow-citizens—the parents, teachers, and youth of this generation—as may do us the favor to read these pages.

II.—THE BIBLE AS A CLASSIC.

It is greatly to be desired that our children and youth should grow up with the conviction firmly fixed in their minds, that the Bible is a classic of the very highest authority in all matters of education, taste, and genius ; that it holds the same place of preëminence in the republic of letters which it holds in the Church of God. It is exceedingly important, that the public mind should be made to understand what the most eminent scholars of all ages and all lands have always understood and confessed—that there is no book in the world which can stand before the Bible as a classic. Such an impression, early implanted and generally received, would do much to save our young people from the evils of that flimsy, superficial literature, which, in the form of the wild, extravagant romance, the love-

sick novel, and the run-mad poem, is coming in upon us like a flood. It would do much to rescue the rising generation from that deluge of fiction, which now threatens to overlay the learning of this boasted nineteenth century with a deeper detritus of trash than that of all the geological epochs.

Now, the Bible, regarded as a model of classical taste, is the great antidote and corrective for this evil. We must teach our youth to look upon it, not only as a book for the Sabbath and the Sanctuary, but as a book for the family, the school, and the college. We must set it before them as worthy of the most honored place, alike in the cottages of the poor, the palaces of the rich, and the libraries of the learned. We must not let them forget, that it is, at once, the most ancient, the most sublime, the most wonderful of all the classics. We do not discard Homer and Virgil from the classics because they contain a religion, even an absurd, fabulous religion; why, then, should we underrate, or disparage the classical claims of the Bible, because it contains a religion, and that, the only true religion? Does the Bible cease to be a classic, because, in addition to the inspiration of human genius, it has the higher inspiration of God? Does its learning cease to be learning, its eloquence to be eloquent, because it is sanctified and animated by the breath of Divinity? No; the Bible is as truly a classic as Homer or Virgil, Xenophon or Cicero, Milton or Addison. It fills a place in ancient and modern literature, which no Greek or Roman author ever filled, or can fill. It has done, for the literature of all civilized nations, what no Greek or Roman book could ever have done.

As a Hebrew book, for more than fifteen centuries, it comprised almost the entire literature and learning of a whole nation. As a Hebrew book, it exerted an influence which no other book,

not even the Koran of Mohammed, has ever attained over any people. And, notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of states and empires, the removal and extinction of nations, it has never lost its original supremacy. It acquired the same place of power over the conquering, classical Greeks and Romans, which it had held so long over the Jews. It then did, successively, for the conquering barbarians of Northern Europe, what it had done for the Greeks and Romans. A classic to the Hebrews, it became a classic in the languages of Demosthenes and Cicero ; and it has become classical in the vernacular tongue of every European nation. And that which it has done for these, it is now doing in every pagan nation on earth to which the Protestant missionary has been sent.

It is not too much, then, to claim for the Bible, that, as a classic, it stands without a rival at the head of all human literature. It is not too much to say, that it has eventually controlled and impregnated, with its own immortal spirit, the literature of every people, into whose vernacular it has been translated. And at this moment, there is not, perhaps, in the whole world of letters, a more important and effective work going forward, than that work of translation, which, under the silent but sublime labors of the missionary, is making the Bible a classic book in every human tongue. There has been no such transmigration from land to land, and from language to language, of the Koran, or the Shaster, or any other book claiming to be a Divine revelation. The Bible, therefore, whether we read it in its original tongues, in its manifold ancient and modern versions, or in our own admirable English translation, bears upon its face the very aspect of majesty, of high classical antiquity, of inherent undisputed superiority. Translate it, however badly, dilute it, however much with paraphrases ; still

it is almost impossible to hide the native beauty of its imagery, or the original lustre of its thoughts. They will still break out, like sunshine through the clouds, or spring-buds from the cells in which winter had bound them.

There is a richness of conception, a universality in its spirit, a range and amplitude of thought, a power of illustration, a truthfulness to nature, an insight into character, a familiarity with the unseen and eternal, a fund of information, a variety of incident, and a consciousness of authority in all its utterances, which give to all the words and images of the Bible, the charm of originality, the impress of genius, and the force of an endless life. No book ever did speak, or can speak to the heart of the individual man, and to the great heart of the world, as the Bible has done. It alone has a voice which can reach all the depths of the human spirit, and awake the slumbering intellect from the stupor of ages. It alone, of religious books, has a largeness of view which makes it congenial to humanity everywhere ; classical and indigenuous on every soil, in every era, beneath the stars of every firmament. It is as much at home with man amid the splendid capitals of Europe, the snows of Greenland, the islands of the South Seas, and the wild woods of America, as it was in the streets of Jerusalem, or the hill country of Judea. You feel, at once, on reading it, and you can never cease to feel while you read, that, if it is anything, it is everything ; it bears its own credentials ; it carries a self-evidencing power, not only of religious truth, but of classic beauty. It is true to nature and true to man ; it describes to the life, the world within, and the world without. It speaks of that which we know already, so truly, and with such graphic power, as to impress us with the conviction of the truth of everything else which it tells us, about things which we did not know

Moreover, everything in it, and about it, is on a scale of magnificence and grandeur. Everything bears the stamp of a more than regal, more than mortal greatness. Everything is in accordance with the character of its infinite author ; everything is represented as it stands related to him ; so that what is insignificant in itself becomes great from its connection with the Deity. And no mind can come fully under its influence, for any length of time, without partaking somewhat of its own intellectual and moral greatness. Does a man seek for great thoughts, fitted to enlarge the intellect ? Here are thoughts as vast as the universe of matter or mind. Does he crave burning words ? Here are words that glow with the fires of immortality. Does he love poetry, and ask for images of beauty ? Here are angelic harmonies, and forms radiant with all the tints of earth and heaven. Does he love to read the records of the great ? Here are the most wonderful characters in history—characters that lived a thousand years—characters, “without beginning of days or end of years.”

Now, let any child read this book in the nursery and in the school, and then read it on through life ; let the poor laborer study it nightly after his daily toil ; let the humblest cottager in the land make it the companion of his thoughts from the cradle to the grave ; let the young man make it the guide of his youth, and the old man the companion of his declining years ; and it is as if he had been associated with the most exalted scenes and characters in the universe ; it is as if you had taken him out from his humble dwelling, and sent him to school to patriarchs, prophets, and apostles ; it is, as if you had given him converse and familiar fellowship with kings and nobles of the earth, and with the angels of God ; it is as if he had been caught up to that third heaven of unutterable things, where, in

the visions of God, he might learn the true dimensions of man. Let any man of ordinary intelligence be thoroughly initiated into the great things of this book, and it shall be the best possible guaranty, that his estimate of all other things will be correct; to borrow the phraseology of Chalmers, he can never more forget the relative proportion of two magnitudes—the littleness of time, the greatness of eternity.

The constant reading of this book cannot fail to form a true taste, because it cannot fail to inspire a love of truth and beauty—a real heart-felt appreciation of the sublime and beautiful both in nature and art. And this taste, if early formed, becomes an effectual safe-guard against all false, meretricious writings. If you educate your child so as to give him an early fondness for such models of poetic art as the *Iliad* or *Paradise Lost*, there is not much danger that he will acquire a relish for trash and bombast. Even so it is with a mind, early imbued with admiration for the Bible as a model of classic beauty. In correcting the judgment and elevating the taste, a constant study of the Bible has much of the same effect on the mind, as that which would be produced by an observation of the works of nature and art in all lands. It is, as if one had become a universal traveller—had seen man in all his moods, nature in all her aspects, grandeur in its most stately steppings, and beauty in her loveliest charms. Yes, of all books, the Bible is the truest Cosmos. And of all students, the Bible student is the most thorough cosmopolite. Its variety is endless. Its scenes and characters are diversified and infinite, like the universe.

In illustration of this boundless variety of subjects contained in the Bible, the following words of Mrs. Ellis, at once comprehensive and glowing with the poetry of real life, may be cited: “From the worm that grovels in the dust beneath our feet, to

the Leviathan in the foaming deep ; from the moth that corrupts the secret treasure, to the eagle that soars above his eyrie in the clouds ; from the ass in the desert, to the lamb within the shepherd's fold ; from the consuming locust, to the cattle upon a thousand hills ; from the rose of Sharon, to the cedar of Lebanon ; from the crystal stream gushing forth out of the flinty rock, to the wide waters of the deluge ; from the lonely path of the wanderer, to the gathering of a mighty multitude ; from the tear that falls in secret, to the din of battle and the shout of a triumphant host ; from the mourner clad in sackcloth, to the prince in purple robes ; from the gnawings of the worm that dieth not, to the seraphic visions of the blest ; from the still voice of conscience, to the thunders of Omnipotence ; from the depths of hell, to the regions of eternal glory ; there is no degree of beauty or deformity, no tendency to good or evil, no shade of darkness or gleam of light which does not come within the cognizance of the Holy Scriptures ; and therefore, there is no expression or conception of the mind that may not find a corresponding picture ; no thirst for excellence that may not meet with its full supply, and no condition of humanity necessarily excluded from the unlimited scope of adaption and sympathy comprehended in the language and spirit of the Bible."

Are we not then authorized in saying of the Bible, that besides all its other uses, it is entitled to the place of preëminence amongst books, as being the great treasure-house of thought and the great model of classic beauty—the most wonderful and perfect work of taste and genius which has ever appeared amongst men ? Call it what you will, a Divine revelation, or a human production—an inspiration from God, or an inspiration of genius ; still it must be admitted to be the most remarkable book in the world, and to exhibit the most remarkable

achievement, that has ever been made by man, or for man, in his advance towards perfection. On this point, however, we find an ample solution. We hold it to be the greatest of classics, because it is inspired of God—the most perfect work of the human mind, because a mind more than human is everywhere at work in it. “Thy testimonies are wonderful.”

III.—THE BIBLE ADAPTED TO CHILDHOOD.

It is worthy of remark, and it should be to all parents an instructive fact, that there is a sort of development and progress in the Sacred Scriptures, corresponding to the development and progress of human life. The world has had its periods of infancy, childhood, and youth, prior to full maturity. Every individual of our race has the same corresponding periods. And, answering to these, the Bible history may be said to have its several periods of infancy, childhood, and youth. The New Testament, with its sublime Gospel history, its profound doctrinal Epistles, and its mysterious prophetic Apocalypse, is but the finishing of that intellectual and moral manhood, which is supposed to have had its early education in the preparatory school of the Old Testament.

The composition of the different books of Scripture extended through fifteen centuries. The Bible, in the order of its formation, seems to be exactly adapted to life in the order of its advancement. And if so, it would appear reasonable, that every individual should follow that order in the study of it, which its great author adopted in giving it to the world. In order then, that a man may be able fully to understand and appreciate the New Testament, he must have read the Old ; and not only

have read it, but, what is the all important and instructive fact, he must have read it in his youth—known it like Timothy from his very childhood. If he has failed to read it at that period of life, for which God seems to have expressly designed it, he has lost an advantage which it is almost impossible ever to regain. He has lost, indeed, what no subsequent reading or knowledge of it can ever give him—the impressions of childhood, all those peculiarly vivid and ineffaceable impressions which the Bible never fails to make upon every child who reads it aright. And there is scarcely anything which we receive in childhood, which a man might not better afford to lose. With no remembrances of the Bible, coming up fresh from the fountains of his childhood, in all his subsequent reading, he finds himself in the condition of an old man with an uncultivated memory, sitting down to the task of learning a new language. If we would acquire the knowledge of new languages with facility, we must do it in early life ; we must, at least, lay a foundation for it, by studying the grammar in childhood and youth. In an important sense, the Old Testament history is the grammar, by which we must learn the language of the whole Bible. There are some books which we are all accustomed to read in our childhood, if we ever read them at all. They have not much attraction for us, unless we read them as children ; and then, they never lose their charm. We can read them with fresh interest even down to old age ; just because, having first read them at the proper season, we live over again in each perusal all the impressions of our childhood and youth.

Even so it is with the Bible, especially with those narrative portions of the Old Testament, which no child can read without wonder and delight, and which none that reads can ever forget. Every return to them in subsequent life, will be like

going back to the home of our childhood after years of absence, to renew our youthful sports and pleasures in that quiet valley, or on that river's bank, or beneath that humble roof, where first we saw the light. Indeed, we have no hesitation in saying, that the best possible preparation for a full understanding and appreciation of the Scriptures, in the years of our maturity, is, that like Timothy we should have known them from our childhood.

Have you never observed with what difficulty an old man, unacquainted with the Bible in his youth, is induced to read the Old Testament regularly through? Have you ever seen the experiment of a first reading, made by one who has long cherished skeptical opinions? Take a man of strong common sense, well-educated as to other books, but ignorant of the Bible, and induce him, if you can, to read it for the first time. Suppose him unacquainted even with the New Testament; and now, at your request, he sits down to the task of reading the Old Testament regularly from the beginning. What is the result? In all probability, before he reaches the end of Genesis, he will close the book in utter incredulity and disgust. He cannot understand it. He sees no beauty in it. He abandons the task in despair. No; that will not do for him. With him you must try a different method. He has been too long mingling as an actor, in the daily affairs of our present busy world, to be placed back so far, and so suddenly, into that wonderful world of the past. Had he been a boy of twelve or sixteen years, he would have read on, allured and absorbed by those stupendous scenes which have so repelled and disgusted him as a man. The very things which so offend him as a rationalist and an infidel, would have charmed him most as a child.

But with him now you must reverse the process, if you would attract him by the Bible. You must give him the New Testament first ; and, with that, let him work his way back to the simple faith of childhood. Let him first read the New Testament, which is mainly addressed to the logical reason and the moral sense of man, at his maturity ; and then, converted and become as it were a little child again, and keeping ever in his hand the New Testament as a lamp to his feet, he will, perhaps, have faith enough in history, and confidence enough in God, to thread his way through all the wonders of the Old—to see beauty, glory, and divinity in all that ancient, oriental, Bible history, which recounts the youth of nature, the childhood of the world, and the infancy of all created things. Still, there may be some things, even then, hard to be understood, which will be to him a stumbling-block as long as he lives ; and that for no other cause than this—that his parents neglected the ordinance of God, which, old as the days of Moses, required them to teach all these things to their child, while he was a child.

As an illustration of the truth of these remarks, you may observe, that when our foreign missionaries carry the gospel to the adult population of heathen lands, it is the New Testament which they first translate, and put into the hands of the people. And then, by degrees, as they become somewhat acquainted with the New Testament Scriptures, portions of the Old are translated. But as soon as schools are established, and the native children and youth collected for instruction, the whole Bible from the beginning, with all its wonderful events, is set before them in that same order of nature by which God has adapted it to the opening minds of every land and of every generation.

It is true that the young mind is interested in reading the New Testament as well as the Old ; for this has its wonderful things as well as that. Indeed, there is in the New Testament, taken separately, the same gradual advancement from the simple to the profound, which marks the Scriptures throughout as a whole—first, the wonderful personal biography of Jesus, then the wider history of the Apostles, next the profound epistles, and then the sublime prophesies of the Apocalypse ; each preparing the way for its successor, and each adapted to maturer years and a larger knowledge in the reader. You will find, however, that the mind of a child will be mostly attracted by precisely those parts of the New Testament—the biographical and historical, which contain the “signs and wonders,” and in which it resembles the Old ; such, for example, as the apparition of angels, voices from heaven, the mighty works of Jesus, the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God.

Now, if there be truth in these remarks, you see at once, what an important place the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New, hold in the education of our children. As a book of education, no part of the Bible has become, or ever can become obsolete. The whole Bible, from first to last, is inspired of God and wisely arranged, so as to meet the wants of the human mind, in its aspirations after knowledge and happiness, in every stage of its development from infancy to old age. And this is more than can be claimed for any other book in the world.

We believe the study of the Bible, with all its wonderful history and biography—its kings and statesmen, its women and children, its heroes and sages, its bards and prophets, its patriarchs and apostles, its orators and jurists—to be just as needful

now, in the education of our youth, as it ever was in any former period. We believe the Bible to be a complete and perfect text-book of instruction. We hold it to be, not only the best book which has ever existed, but for all purposes of education, the best which could have been made out of such materials as this world's history has thus far afforded. We have no idea, that any man or set of men, however wise and learned, could now frame, out of all the existing materials in the world outside of the Bible, any book which could be compared with this, in its admirable adaptation, as a book of education, to the youth of all generations and all lands, and which, at the same time, should be none the less adapted to all other periods of human life. No such collectanea could be formed out of all that remains of the classical learning of Greece and Rome. The literature of all modern times, excepting that which has been modelled after the Bible, could not furnish such a compend of universal instruction. This, indeed, is one among the many wondrous characteristics of the Bible—its vast combination of different elements, its amazing comprehensiveness, adapting it to each class and each individual in particular, and to all alike.

We grant you, there are portions of it which no child can understand ; which no man, no philosopher, can fully understand. There are many things in it which we see, as through a glass, darkly ; which we must be content to know only in part ; just as there are many barren rocks, and trackless desert wastes, and vast ice-fields on the earth's surface, whose utility we cannot perceive, and which a modern philosopher would probably have left out, had he been consulted in the making of a world. There is just as little reason to think, that human philosophy would have made the world as it is, or have governed

it as it is governed, as that it would have made just such a Bible as God has given us. In either case, his ways are not as our ways. But is it any impeachment of the Divine wisdom, or proof that the world was not made by God, that we find in it a Scylla and Charybdis, a Cape Hatteras, a frozen ocean, or a Sahara desert? No more is it an argument against the Divine origin or excellence of the Scriptures, that they contain whole chapters of genealogy, and ceremonial laws, and unknown prophecies, which we may not be able to bring within the compass of our views of utility. If there are things in the Bible hard to be understood, deep things of God which have not yet given up their secrets to any human explorer; things that, from the first, were intended for the reading of future ages; let us not forget that the same is true of universal nature; "there are more things in heaven and earth than are known to our philosophy." Let us bear in mind that a time is coming, when we shall see, eye to eye, and face to face; shall know even as we are known. A future day shall bring to light what is now hidden from our vision; and if not the day of this life, at any rate the night of death. For both, in material and in spiritual things, it stands true, that "darkness shows us worlds of light we never saw by day." We may rest assured that a Bible without mysteries, and a world without wonders, would be no improvement of either, as it regards the great purpose for which they were intended. Our modern rationalist would strike out all that is miraculous in the Bible. He would reject, as fabulous, all the accounts of a world created out of nothing, the origin and unity of our race, the temptation and fall of Adam, the longevity of the patriarchs, the Ark and Deluge of Noah, the tower of Babel, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the pillar of

cloud and fire, the trumpets of Sinai, the waters of the smitten rock, the burning bush, the manna of the wilderness, the crossing of Jordan, the falling of the walls of Jericho, the stopping of the sun, the vision of angels, the fire from heaven, the raising of the dead, the fiery furnace, and the den of lions at Babylon, the fish of Jonah, the translation of Enoch, the ascension of Elijah, the transfiguration and all the stupendous miracles of Christ. But, without these, what would the Bible be, more than any other book, to childhood and youth? Did God make the Bible, any more than he did this wondrous world before us, only for the accommodation of a few rationalists and infidel philosophers! If all the infidels, who have ever lived, had believed in it, their whole number would be but as a drop in the bucket, compared with the millions upon millions, who have believed in it as it is, without their aid, and despite their opposition. In fact, it is by these very things, that the Bible is so admirably adapted to the young. It is by the attraction of these Divine wonders, that it has gained and held its mastery over the children and the adult population of every civilized country in the world. Truly, "Thy testimonies are wonderful."

IV.—THE BIBLE IN THE SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

From all that has been said in favor of the Bible, as a classic, and as a book adapted to childhood and youth, it follows as a legitimate inference of great practical importance, that it ought, invariably, to form a part of the regular course of instruction in all our schools and colleges. In every system of classical, collegiate education, it ought to be studied in its original tongues,

just as our youth study the Greek and Latin authors. We see no reason why, as models of beauty, or as exercises of mental culture, the language and literature of Rome or of Athens should be preferred to that of Jerusalem. On the single ground of taste and genius, we believe that Moses and the Prophets, in their venerable Hebrew, are fully equal to Homer and Virgil, Herodotus and Livy. And, accordingly, an acquaintance with them in the original, ought to be regarded as an essential part of a liberal, accomplished, collegiate education.

But the Bible has much wider claims than these. Few comparatively, can ever study it in its original tongues. Every man, every child at school, may study it in English. And it is chiefly as an English classic, the best and most important in our language, that we advocate its claims. No school ought to be found without the Bible. No course of education ought to be considered complete without it. No individual ought to be regarded as adequately educated without a knowledge of it. If there is any one book which deserves to be held as indispensable in every school, and in every course of education, it is the Bible. As an English classic, and a text-book of daily instruction, it ought to hold the same foremost place in all our schools, which we know a part of it did hold as a Hebrew classic, and that by Divine commandment, in all the schools of the Jews for thousands of years; and which, indeed it does still hold amongst the remnants of the chosen people throughout the world.

It is in no spirit of dogmatism, that we set up this claim for the Bible as a book of education at school. Argument could be given, if any argument were needed, except the bare statement of the case. Does it require any argument to show that the book, which has caused all our learning, as well as our reli-

gion, to differ from that of the Mohammedans, the ancient Pagans, and the modern heathen nations, ought to be read in our schools ; that the book which tells us all we know, with certainty, about God and a future state, and gives us the highest sanctions we have, for our morality, our laws, our institutions of marriage, the family and the state, ought to be read and studied at school ? Surely, if argument is to be brought, it would require much argument to show that such a book ought not to be studied there. If ancient history ought to be studied at school, then ought the Bible to be studied, as containing the most ancient, most important, and most interesting history in the world. If the lives of illustrious men ought to be read, then ought this book to be read, with its biography of illustrious names, extending from Adam to Jesus Christ. If our youth may read at school the great masters of eloquence and poesy, then may they read the Bible there, as containing the sublimest strains of the one, and the most finished specimens of the other, which our race has ever produced. If the elements of all moral and mental science, the principles of virtue and political wisdom, may be taught at school, then may the Bible be taught, for it is the fountain whence all these have flowed. If religion itself ought to be taught at school, as a legitimate part, and by far the most important part of all education, then ought the Bible to be taught, as being the book of our common Christianity, the only true and Divine revelation in the world.

But, independently of this last consideration, our plea for the Bible as a school-book still stands good. You tell us you do not receive the Bible as the book of your religion ; or, you do not wish your child to learn Christianity at school ; or, that this is a part of instruction which you reserve for yourself. Well, be it so. And what then ? Our claim for the Bible as

a school-book is still untouched. If you deny the inspiration of God, you cannot deny the inspirations of genius which breathe forth on every page. If you choose to ignore all its evidences as a Divine revelation, you cannot ignore its history, and biography, and morality, and learning, its eloquence and poetry, without, at the same time forfeiting your own claim to be a man of taste, capable of appreciating the sublime and beautiful. If unwilling to have the religion of the Bible taught at school, what objection can you have to its learning and morality? You cannot wish to exclude from our schools the most effective and beneficial history, biography, literature, and philosophy, which the world has ever produced.

If it could be proved, by an absolute demonstration, that the religion of the Bible is a cunningly devised fable, so that Christianity should henceforth take its place with the mythology of Greece and Rome as an exploded system, still it would remain true as a historical fact, and, indeed the most remarkable fact on that assumption in the world's history, that this book has been more widely known and received by the nations of the earth, has exerted a more beneficial and enduring influence upon them than any other book, whether of facts or of mythologies. And, therefore, both for what it contains in itself, and for what it has done in the world, even as a book of mythology, it would be entitled to take rank, in our schools and colleges, above Homer or Hesiod, Virgil or Ovid. True or false, then, inspired or uninspired, Divine or human, the Bible deserves to be studied at school, so long as anything is studied; so long as men have any interest in knowing, and in causing their children to know, what has been said and done in this world of ours in past ages. And we must be permitted here to say, that the child in this Christian land, who is permitted to go through

all the elegant, fashionable schools of learning, and complete his education without even a reading of the Bible, is chargeable with a degree of ignorance, which, if the book were only human, would be a disgrace to him ; and which, if it be Divine, is both a disgrace and an incalculable injury.

V.—THE BIBLE IN OUR ENGLISH VERSION.

To all these general considerations in favor of the Bible as the basis of education, there is one more to be added which ought to have special weight with every individual who claims the English as his mother tongue, or loves to read that tongue in its noblest utterances of thought and feeling. It is the circumstance, that we possess a translation of it, which, simply as an English book, is as classical to our language as it is faithful and true to the original. This grand old English Bible, now crowned with the honors of nearly two hundred and fifty years, opened evening and morning to kindle the devotions of the millions that speak our tongue, has come down to us with every quality and attribute that could make any book a "well of English undefiled." Two centuries and a half of profound biblical study, and of advancing criticism in every walk of science and literature, while revealing some minor inaccuracies as to the letter, have brought to light no essential defect or error as to the spirit and tenor of this wonderful version ; on the contrary, they have but served to exalt it the more in the eyes of the scholar, the more to enshrine it in the reverential and admiring affections of the people.

It is a matter of the very highest importance to English literature, and it ought to be a cause of profound gratitude to

God, that this glorious old version was made precisely when it was, and by just those men who took it in hand. The forty-seven aged, pious, and profoundly learned men, who, after years of united labor, under the direction, but not dictation of King James, published this version in 1611, only completed a work which had been going on for centuries. There had been five preceding translations into English, all of which had prepared the way for this more accurate version under the royal authority. The work of translation had, in fact, been commenced by John Wickliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, two hundred and fifty years before ; and, in spite of all opposition, both in England and on the continent, it had gone steadily onward through the successive versions of Tyndale, Coverdale, the Geneva Bible, and that of the Bishops, until it reached its memorable consummation in the present translation. The learned John Selden, who was a contemporary of these translators, remarks, that "the English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world, and gives the sense of the original best." That early opinion has been confirmed by the almost unanimous judgment of posterity ; and, in that judgment, the great body of the church, wherever the English tongue is spoken, has rested without desiring any further change.

Now, the glory of this translation, as an English classic, lies in the fact, that having grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength of our mother tongue, it reached its completion precisely at the time when the language itself had attained its noontide of excellence and vigor. The perfection of the one was co-existent with the full maturity of the other ; precisely as it had been with the Greek tongue and the old Septuagint. When our translation was made, the age of Addison, with its polish and graceful diction, had not come. But precisely that

age of masculine strength, of graphic diction, of sublime thought, of terse idiomatic expression, had come, which best prepared our language to give utterance to the revelations of God. No period before could have done it so well ; and certainly none since. It is enough to say that it was the age of Lord Bacon and of Shakspeare. The father of the inductive philosophy, and the greatest name in the annals of dramatic literature, were the contemporaries of these translators of the Bible ; and they were soon followed by Milton, Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton. If there are any five names in human history, capable of stamping the seal of immortality upon a nation's literature, they are the five great classic names just mentioned. But it was in the very midst of these and others like them, some going before, and some coming after—it was in the very words, and idioms, and images of power and beauty, wherewith they clothed their own immortal thoughts, that our present translation of the Bible first stood forth complete before the world—at once a product and a monument of the scholarship of that remarkable age.

It was certainly a most signal illustration of the gracious, over-ruling Providence of God, that the time should be so auspicious, and the hands so competent for the accomplishment of so great a work. We behold here a fitness of things precisely akin to that which existed when the Greek language was permitted to attain its greatest perfection at home, in the hands of Athenian sages, poets, and orators, and its widest dominion abroad, through the conquests of Alexander the Great, before it became a recipient of the Word of God in the Septuagint translation. Of all times in the history of the Greek tongue that was the best for such a translation. But, speaking after the manner of men, we scarcely can say which was the greater gainer, the Bible or the English language, in having our trans-

lation made when it was. Certainly it was for both, the fittest time that could be chosen in the history of our language. It was undoubtedly an admirable thing for the religion of the Bible, that this robust Anglo-Saxon speech, with all its borrowed wealth from other tongues, should be suffered first to reach its full maturity of strength and beauty under the guiding hands of such masters as Spenser and Shakspeare, Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sidney ; and then, before it had lost one jot or tittle of its glory, should be so incorporated and enshrined in the living Word of God, that while the speech lives the book must live, because the book is itself the noblest utterance of the speech. 人

On the other hand, how fortunate for the language itself, and for all English literature, that it should have such a canonization in the Bible and such a book in which to be canonized ; that the noble, majestic dialect in which Shakspeare and Bacon uttered their thoughts, and which Milton, Locke, and Newton soon after learned at school, has been perpetuated and immortalized by being fast-anchored to the oracles of God ! The benefit has thus been mutual ; and it is immense. By means of this inimitable translation, the terse and mighty diction of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been transmitted to posterity, and is at this hour the familiar household dialect of the Anglo-Saxon race. But for the English Bible, who can tell us how much of this diction would not now be hopelessly obsolete ? By means of this book—the only book read and revered by all men—our English language has had the rare good fortune to daguerreotype itself at the highest perfection, and to transmit the likeness to all generations. For whilst it has been, and still is, endlessly diversified and enriched by contributions from without, as for example in the word which we have just used—a word derived from recent art—still the grand outlines,

and while the book lives the speech must live

the old idioms, the ground-forms, remain unchanged and inviolate. By this book they are placed beyond the possibility of deterioration or desuetude. While the language is constantly gaining, it can never lose anything of its original classic power so long as this Bible of its palmiest days is read by the people; because this book is the connecting link between the present and the past, the spoken and the written language.

It is the nature and the imperfection of all spoken languages to be perpetually changing. The new is ever crowding out the old, unless there be some influence to counteract it. The words of one century become obsolete in another. Mere change is no improvement, unless while we gain the new we can also retain the old. But this, the English Bible has enabled our language to do in a remarkable degree—to hold fast the old while grasping the new treasure. Like Marshall Ney to the French army, it has been the rear-guard of the grand army of Anglo-Saxon progress. Without retarding its march, it has covered the rear with glory, and prevented loss or damage there. This book, universally read as it is, and must be, by a Protestant people, renders it impossible that words thus enshrined in the daily thoughts of the people should ever grow obsolete. In fact, very few have ever become obsolete; and even these are in portions seldom read. With these rare exceptions, the Scriptures of this authorized version, now, after the lapse of two centuries and a half, are as intelligible to the people as they were at the beginning. And so this version has done for our language, what no other influence under heaven could have done—it has been an ark of safety which has borne it across the wide abyss of centuries, and is still bearing it gloriously adown the current of ages. As long as this translation stands in its integrity, to be read in the closets and around the family

altars of the English race, just so long must the words in which Shakspeare and Milton sang, in which Bacon, Locke, and Newton expounded the laws of the universe, live as the familiar spoken words of the people.

Now, in these days of fast progress, there may be some persons so fond of novelty, so disposed to ignore or disparage all the greatness of the past, that they can see no advantage in having our classic English perpetuated from generation to generation. But we are not of that number, and trust the reader of these pages is not. There are some things in the world which we love all the better because they are ancient. Of these, religion is one. Literature is another. Like old and tried friends they are not to be cast aside for strangers and upstarts. We would have our children grow up familiar with the massive old dialect of Milton, rather than run the risk of getting something worse by the fancied improvements of the last novel-writer or the morning newspaper. Would it not be a glorious thing even for young Italy, if the descendants of the ancient Romans had never ceased to speak the dialect of Cicero and Cæsar? Would not modern Greece be a more glorious land to-day, if her generations had preserved inviolate the mother tongue of Plato and Demosthenes; if there had been some great sacred book of the people to bind the spoken to the written language? In our estimation, among the manifold advantages flowing from this time-honored, universally-read English Bible, it is far from being the least, that it has stood as an impregnable bulwark for the classic purity of the English tongue, resisting all the encroachments of needless innovation and holding it to its ancient landmarks, without hindering its growth or improvement. A similiar influence has been exerted upon the German language by the noble Bible of Luther.

Doubtless the greatest of all advantages, is the influence which it has everywhere and unceasingly exerted in favor of the high interests of the Protestant religion. This influence has been incalculable ; and it is increasing every day, with the growing age of the book and the ever-widening sphere of its circulation. Dr. Newman, the Papist, though intending it for a different purpose, has paid a just tribute to the power and excellence of our version in the following profound and beautiful words : “ Who shall say, that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the strongholds of heresy in this country ? It lives in the ear like a music that can never be forgotten—like the sound of church-bells which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments ; and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle, of pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing which doubt has never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. In the length and breadth of the land, there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible.”

No doubt something might be gained, in the way of correcting small inaccuracies, by a new version of the Scriptures. But infinitely more would be lost by destroying that prestige of a long and glorious past which the English Bible now enjoys—by breaking that peculiar charm both to the ear and the heart

which the countless millions of its readers have all felt To break up all these hallowed associations, to unsettle the public confidence in that "old family Bible which lies on the stand," to substitute some new and modernized Bible in its stead, cut and fashioned according to the latest style of criticism—all this, if it could be done, as we think it never can, and hope it never may, would be an unmitigated calamity to the church and the world. It would be to lose all that is precious and impressive in the fact, that the sacred book of the people is the great standard classic of the people's literature. It would be to incur all that is evil in cutting a nation's literature loose from its ancient moorings, and sending it adrift upon the ocean of endless change.

On this point we respond most heartily to the remarks of an eloquent speaker, Dr. Storrs, at a late anniversary of the American Bible Society. "This old version," said he, "is hallowed with such memories as scarcely belong to another human work. It stretches back one of its far-reaching roots to the very cell of Bede. It strikes down another beneath the burnt ashes of Wickliffe. It sends another under the funeral pile of Tyndale. It twists another around the stake where Cranmer was burned. Give up this version for a trim and varnished new one? Nay verily! Those broad contorted arms have wrestled with the fierce winds of opinion for two hundred years! The sweet birds of heaven have loved to come and sing among them; and they sing there still! Their leaves are leaves of life and healing! There is not a text pendent upon those boughs but has the stuff of religions and literatures in it! They have given of their ribbed strength to every enterprise for human welfare! Give up this version? It is our American inheritance! It came over in the Mayflower! It was brought by Oglethorpe to

Georgia ! It has spread across our land ! It has been the joy of generations to sit under its shadow ! It will stand while the hills stand ! We will not give up this oak of the Ages, for any modern tulip tree at present !”



VI.—THE BIBLE IN THE FOUR GREAT CLASSIC TONGUES.

It is interesting to trace the history of the Word of God in its connection with the leading languages of civilized man. First, we find it, or the earlier part of it, in its native Hebrew, which was for ages the advanced guard of all human civilization. Next, we have it—the Old Testament nearly three centuries before the advent of Christ, and the New immediately after—in the Greek tongue, which was, for long ages more, the all-controlling language of classical antiquity. Then, again, from the days of Jerome, we find it in the imperial world-conquering Latin, which held the mastery in Europe down to the sixteenth century. And now, since the Reformation, which left it in the vernacular of all the great civilized nations of Protestant Europe, we have it above all others, in this unparalleled English, which, to say the least, is the leading language of modern Christendom ; which is doing more than all others put together to spread the true gospel of God, and with it civilization, among the tribes and peoples of the heathen world.

There have been four great languages, which have successively held the foremost place in transmitting and diffusing civilization over the globe—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English. And it is one of the grandest facts in the history of literature, that the Word of God has held the place of supremacy in each of them, as its sacred canonical book. Assuredly, no other reli-

gious book—no book whatever—has ever had such a history. If there were no other argument for the book, this fact would be enough—that at the head of these four languages, it has led the march of civilization around the globe.

Of two of these great Bible-transmitting languages, the second and third, we have seen a vivid portraiture by Coleridge, in the following terms : “ Greek, the shrine of the genius of the old world ; as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves ; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of nature herself ; to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded ; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English ; with words like pictures ; with words like the gossamer film of the summer ; at once the variety and picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and the intensity of *Æschylus* ; not compressed to the closest by *Thucydides*, not fathomed to the bottom by *Plato*, not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardors, even under the Promethean touch of *Demosthenes* ! And Latin, the voice of empire and of war, of law and of the state ; inferior to its half-parent and rival in the embodying of passion and in the distinguishing of thought, but equal to it in sustaining the measured march of history, and superior to it in the indignant declamation of moral satire ; stamped with the mark of an imperial and despotizing republic ; rigid in its construction, parsimonious in its synonyms ; reluctantly yielding to the flowery yoke of *Horace*, although opening glimpses of Greek-like splendor in the occasional inspirations of *Lucretius* ; proved, indeed, to the uttermost by *Cicero*, and by him found wanting ; yet majestic in its barrenness, instinct with the spirit of nations, and not with the passions of individuals ; breathing the maxims of the world, and not the tenets of the

schools ; one and uniform in its air and spirit, whether touched by the stern and haughty Sallust, by the open and discursive Livy, by the reserved and thoughtful Tacitus."

If we might adopt a similar style in order to complete the picture of the four great languages, which have in turn become the depositaries and disseminators of the Word of God, we should describe the first of all, the stately and giant-built Hebrew, as the most simple, the most symmetrical, and the most ancient of written tongues ; with letters like blocks of granite, with words like king's palaces, with sentences like cities walled up to heaven ; though robed in the beauties of holiness, yet rugged as the mountains about Jerusalem ; unchangeable in its idiom, unyielding in its structure, unvarying and solemn in its tone, from generation to generation the language of truth and judgment, of adoration and obedience ; spoken first in the garden of Eden, or by the builders of Babel, proclaimed from heaven at Sinai, and written on tables of stone by the finger of Jehovah ; forever preserving its awful dignity, whether sung by the Seraphim above, or by the choirs of the temple, whether carried to the highest heaven of sublimity by Isaiah, or brought down to play amongst the roses of Sharon and the lilies of the valley by Solomon ; yet destitute alike of the elasticity of the Greek and the martial spirit of the Latin, unfitted to skirmish with the one, or charge with the other, but ever marching with the slow and measured tread of an ancient army of elephants.

If such be the Hebrew, the tongue of primeval revelation, and Greek, the tongue of unaided genius, and Latin, the tongue of conquest and empire—what shall we say of this last and mightiest stronghold of the Bible—this English of the old world and the new, of all the sciences, and all the arts, and all the encyclopedias—this English, not of the manuscript and

cloister, but of the printing press, the telegraph, the steam-car, spreading the light of liberty and salvation around the globe—this English of commerce, of education, of colonization, of the Missionary, the Sunday School and Bible Society—this universal Anglo-American speech, whose dominion is wider and mightier than any king or conqueror could ever boast ! Strong in the deep foundations of those old Saxon elements, which underlie it as the mountain granite underlies the surface of the earth ; rich in the accumulated deposits and formations derived from the influx and commingling of other languages ; quickened into life and beauty by the constant culture of more than a thousand years ; breathing everywhere the energy and lofty spirit of the hardiest, most heroic race on the face of the earth ; combining, all in one, the original grandeur of the Hebrew, the gracefulness of the Greek, and the martial might of the Roman tongue ; with matchless ease incorporating into itself images of beauty and sublimity from every monument of ancient art, from every production of modern genius, from every discovery of science in the earth, the air, the seas and skies—now in prose, and now in poetry, adjusting itself to the impersonation and the utterance of every passion and every conception of man—now bursting forth in stern and awful rebuke from the lips of Cromwell and the men of the Commonwealth, and now singing Hosannas to the pomp and circumstance of royalty in the writers of the Restoration—now, in the thunder-tones of reformers and martyrs, denouncing the wrath of God against an ungodly world, and now, in strains as sweet as angels use, whispering the gospel of peace to the hearers of Leighton and Flavel, Wesley and Whitfield, Cecil and Newton—now soaring on adventurous wing with the bard of *Paradise Lost* to the very throne of Deity, and now with the Pilgrim of Bunyan treading

the narrow, weary way to the celestial city—now revealing to the bard of Avon all the depths of human passion, or painting with colors dipped in heaven every stone, and tree, and shrub, and flower, of this lower world—now like some broad and glorious river, flowing grandly through the pages of Addison and Johnson, Hume and Gibbon, Burke and Macaulay, and now rushing on with resistless might through those of Chatham and Fox, and Junius—now rising with grace and grandeur to the high themes of Taylor and Tillotson, Baxter and Owen, Howe and Edwards, Chalmers and Robert Hall, and now sparkling in all the exuberant wit of South and Swift, Sterne and Sidney Smith—now flaming out in the effective satire of Butler or Defoe, of Pope or Byron, and now breathing soft music through the mellifluous verse of Dryden, Thomson, and Goldsmith—now touching the finest chords of human sympathy and brotherhood in the peculiar dialect of Robert Burns, and now glowing more beautiful than the tints upon a maiden's cheek in all the wonderful creations of Walter Scott—now condescending with Cowper and Wordsworth to hold familiar converse with the lowliest living thing, and now transcending both the majesty of Cicero and the fire of Demosthenes in Sheridan and Erskine, Grattan and Canning, Patrick Henry and Daniel Webster—all, and in all from first to last, this grand old English is the leading language of Christendom, and is destined, ere long, as it makes the circuit of the earth, with our Anglo-American race and our Protestant Bible, to become the classic tongue of every heathen nation precisely as the Greek and Latin did to the nations of Europe. This is its manifest destiny.

VII.—THE BIBLE AS RELATED TO THE STATE AND ITS SCHOOLS.

In order to give to this preliminary discussion a practical bearing, it will not be out of place to notice here an important subject, which, in many parts of our country, has of late deeply interested the public mind ; we mean the connection of the Bible with the common or public schools.

We are clear in the conviction, that as the Bible ought to be made the basis of all education in childhood and youth, so the Bible, in some form or other, ought to be used in all schools, whether private or public. If it is right and proper to make the Bible a book of education for any children, or in any school whatever, it would be hard to show why children should be deprived of its benefits by the mere circumstance of being taught in a public school. There is, in fact, no logic by which such a difference can be maintained. Still further, if any Bible is to be used in such a school, this inimitable English Bible is entitled to that distinction. It is of this our distinguished American orator, Fisher Ames, said : "Should not the Bible regain the place it once held as a school-book ? Its morals are pure, its examples captivating and noble ; and in no other book is there so good English, so pure and so elegant." Of this, the learned Adam Clark said : "Our translators have not only made a standard translation, but they have made their translation the standard of our language." As such, no school, no process or system of education, can be complete without it.

It is manifest that the use of the Bible, as a book of education in these schools, is the thing which has caused such an array of opposition against the common school system in cer-

tain quarters. But no institution amongst us can be dearer to the hearts of the American people, more deeply enshrined in the precious memories of their forefathers, and more congenial to all their patriotic hopes for the future, than the common school—the school supported by the common fund of the people, and open, in common, to all the children of the people. If we have an institution in America, which is essentially and intensely American, in its spirit and design, in all its tendencies and results, combining beautifully the three great elements of republicanism—liberty, equality, fraternity—that institution is the common school. If there is any one efficient source of influence in our country which is naturally calculated to heal those antipathies and animosities, that separate the rich and the poor, to act as a check upon those sectarian jealousies that divide us as Christians, and to break down those distinctions of language and nationality that arise from the different European races composing our population, so as to bind us all together in the bonds of a common brotherhood, it is that influence, of early, universal, and ceaseless operation, which goes out from the common school. We cannot but think that the saddest day which could dawn on this fair land, and these glorious institutions of our fathers, would be that in which our common school education should cease, and leave the children of America to grow up under the unchecked influence of all those antagonisms of wealth and poverty, of religious sects, of political parties, and of different races, which now distinguish and curse the nations of Europe. As it is, these bitter waters are, in a manner, healed with us at the fountain-head, by casting the salt of a common education, a common patriotism, and a common Christianity into our common schools. And that healing salt is the Bible. It is the common school that constitutes the hope and conserv-

ator of our country. And it is the Bible that makes the common school so hopeful and conservatory.

Now, it seems to us, that we have already pointed out the true ground on which the Bible is to be defended as a text-book of education in every school supported by the state. That ground is, that the Bible has other highly important claims besides those of religion ; claims, too, which fall fully within the province of legislation which rightfully belongs to the state, as a state. The Bible has lessons for the state, and lessons for society, as truly as it has them for the church, and for the individual. Society and the state, as such, can no more set aside those lessons, than can the church and the individual. It is not that the state undertakes to teach religion, when it provides a common education for its children, and, as the best of all guaranties for the education which it needs, introduces the Bible into its common schools. Not at all. But it is that the state has a mission to perform for all its citizens, and a work of education to do for all its children, which it is bound to attend to, which it can, in no wise, refuse or delegate to another, without repudiating the high obligation laid upon it by the God of nations. This high obligation is, to secure for all its children such an education, both intellectual and moral, as shall make them good citizens. Now, intelligence and morality, as all agree, are essential to good citizenship. So that if the state undertakes to teach any thing, it must teach morality. But there is no substantial morality without the sanctions of religion. God and a future state are as truly the basis of all moral as of all religious duties. In teaching morality, therefore, the state must teach religion, so far forth as religion is needful to morality. Hence, the Bible has claims to be taught in schools supported by the state ; just because this book, which contains our reli-

gion, at the same time contains all the sanctions, which give force to moral duties. And the state can no more teach morality and make good citizens without the Bible, than the church can make Christians without it.

The book of God is as truly a revelation of morality for the state, as it is a revelation of religion for the church. Short and simple, then, is the chain of reasoning which binds, with all the force of an unanswerable logic, the Bible to the state school. These are its links ; good citizenship is the highest interest of the state ; but there is no good citizenship without a right education ; there is no right education without morality ; there is no sound morality without religion ; and there is no true religion without the Bible. So, that if the state provides any school at all for its children (and if it does not, it is worse than infidel), and seeks to inculcate that morality, which is as needful as intelligence, to make good citizens, it cannot consistently exclude the Bible from its schools, any more than it can divorce morality from religion. Clearly, if it is essential to the welfare and to the very existence of the state, that its children should have the right moral training, and if they cannot obtain such training without religion and the Bible, the state is, in duty bound, to take the book along with its religion for the sake of its morality. But why should any state wish to put asunder two things which God hath thus joined together in indissoluble ties ? It cannot be done. Religion and morality go together in the Bible, and they must ever stand in eternal wedlock. We are willing to concede that the great object of the state, in introducing the Bible as a text-book in the common or public school, is not to teach religion, but only morality and intelligence. This is enough for the state. We are willing, nay, we greatly prefer, to leave religion to be taught by its own appropriate officers,

in its Divinely appointed schools--the family and the church. We agree that the state, as such, has no mission to teach religion, except so far as it is essential to all good citizenship, by being the basis of morality, virtue, and good government. To the church and to the family, to the ministers of the one and the parents of the other, belongs the great work of teaching the religion of the Bible, as an institution of God, designed to prepare men for immortality. The state has nothing to do with the spiritual and immortal interests of man, regarded as a candidate for eternity. But it has much to do, aye, everything to do with his moral, social and political interests, regarded as a citizen, an inhabitant of this world.

When the state, therefore, provides an education for its children, and places the Bible in their hands as a school-book, it is not to prepare them for eternity. It is simply and exclusively to prepare them, as citizens, for the duties of this world ; those duties, too, which no free state, like ours, founded on popular intelligence and virtue, can neglect without infinite peril to its own existence. Here, then, on this plain, palpable distinction, we rest our plea for the Bible, in the state or public school. Aside from its bearings on our immortal destinies, all experience and history have proved this to be the best book, to secure our temporal interests, to fortify our virtue against all temptation, to foster our love of liberty and social order, to expand our patriotism, to inspire us with a heroic moral courage, to ennoble our sense of honor and personal dignity, to enlarge our intelligence, and to form, within us, all those habits of industry, economy, sobriety, enterprise, and integrity, which go to make up individual moral character, the wealth of nations, and the bliss of human life. Let the state, if you please, have nothing to do with the child as an immortal being, and with the Bible as a religious system ; our argument for the common

school, as a state institution, and for the Bible, as its book of instruction, still stands in all its force ; because, as citizens, we can no more dispense with its influence for this world, than we can, as Christians, do without its hopes for the next.

VIII.—THE BIBLE THE PALLADIUM OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

If all this is true of the state in general, with what special force does it apply to our own government, where all sovereignty is in the hands of the people, and everything depends on popular virtue and intelligence? In such a government as this, it is impossible to place too high an estimate upon popular education in the common school. There can be no work more important, no interest more precious, no object more worthy of the fostering care of the state, than the education of its children. If legislation is competent to anything, and fit for anything on earth, it is to conserve this interest, and do this work. Whatever else may be done, or left undone, and be the cost of this what it may, no state can neglect it without peril and ultimate ruin. Our people must be educated. The children must have schools. Education is vital to our existence. Our social and political salvation depends on it. Any policy, which overlooks or neglects this, is suicidal to the state's own existence.

But we are persuaded, that the American people are fully awake to the importance of this great work. If there is anything, for which they are willing to pay out of their common funds, around which they love to rally as a common standard, and which, as a common heritage bequeathed by their fathers, they are ready to defend to the last, with united hearts and hands, it is education in the common school.

We are persuaded, that the common school, in a manner the

germ and nucleus of our free institutions, so early adopted, so universally received, so beneficial in all its results, so congenial to our fundamental laws, and so identified with all the feelings, and habits, of the common people, is the last thing on earth which they would ever consent to surrender. And if any persons in our land, misled by their European education and prejudices, and moved by the direction of a foreign hierarchy, have ever imagined, that our admirable common school system, with all its prestige of a glorious origin and a blessed success, could be broken down and supplanted, we have only to say, that they have mistaken the spirit of the times and of the country in which they live. Attempt to break down our common schools ! And who shall attempt it ? No man, endowed with the heart of a patriot, or the wisdom of a statesman, can ever regard such an attempt but with abhorrence and execration. Whenever, wherever, and by whomsoever made, it must and will be covered with a signal and ignominious defeat, as it has been already. Ten thousand voices shall be lifted with indignation against it.

The American people love a free education, as they love the land that gave them birth, and will stand by the common school. They will look upon opposition to this cherished institution of their country, from whatever quarter, as sacrilegious and traitorous to the best interests of the country. Whatever deeds of darkness, and heaven-daring oppression, may be perpetrated in the Old World, the fires of civil and religious liberty are not to be extinguished, nor the progress of civilization arrested, nor the sun-dial of the world reversed, nor the common schools of America sacrificed, at the dictation of any foreign despot, or the interference of any old or new order of Jesuits. No ! the sovereign people know their rights, and their interests, and dare

maintain them. It was amongst the first lessons of their childhood, learned at the common school, and from the Bible ; and it will be one of the last which they can ever forget. The common school system must and will stand so long as our people remain worthy of their common ancestry. Sooner may you stop the tranquil but resistless flow of our mighty rivers, or dethrone our monarch mountains from their seats, than break down the common school system of America. By all the lessons of their past history, our countrymen have been taught to look upon their common school system as the great fountain of their national glory, and the most important safeguard of their liberties. And even so, what the common school is to the country, the Bible is to the common school—its peculiar glory, its conservator, its heaven-derived Palladium. But wiser and more cautious than the ancient Trojans, an enlightened people will take care, that no enemy at home or abroad, no domestic traitor or wily foreign foe, shall steal away their Palladium. They will keep the schoolmaster at work in the land ; and they will keep the Bible at work in the school. And they will thus, upon the broad basis of popular intelligence and virtue, build a monument of national glory, which shall stand to the latest posterity ; a monument whose apex shall reach the skies, and whose inscriptions all nations shall read and admire—on one side, “ Let there be light,” and on the other, “ Esto Perpetua.”

Yes, in the American common school system, now adopted and in successful operation in almost every State of our Union, from ocean to ocean, we rejoice, as in a great national institution—one of the earliest, as it is the most hopeful of all our institutions. We cling to it as the richest legacy of our fathers, the most sacred and inalienable birthright of our children. We rejoice, in its past success, its present favor with our people,

and its promise of future good. We glory in its republicanism, its nationality, its catholicity, its entire exemption from a narrow partisan and sectarian character. We love it, because it is thoroughly and intensely American. It is free like the air we breathe, large like the rivers, lakes and mountains where we dwell, radiant with light and bountiful with blessed influences, like the all-surrounding skies that bend in beauty over our land. It suits our country. It suits the genius of our people. They love it, and are willing to pay for its support. There is no tax which they pay so willingly as that for education ; and they would not only submit, but seek to be taxed, even to a ten-fold degree, rather than give up the common school.

Most heartily, then, do we rejoice in the decision and unanimity with which our people, both native and adopted, have risen up in resistance against the recent outrageous attempts, which have been made, in several of our leading States and cities, to divide and segregate to sectarian purposes, the common school fund of the country. We cannot too highly applaud the noble sentiments of the Legislature of New York, in their refusal to lift so much as a finger against their common school system, by fractionizing its funds for the benefit of the Church of Rome or any other church. Truly and nobly do they say : " From its inception down to the present day, in every stage of its progress, amid the storm and tempests that have attended the mutations of political parties ; amid the rancor of theological controversy, and the heat of religious excitements, our common school system has moved quietly and majestically along from the smallest beginnings to its present magnificent proportions, under the guidance of our pure and patriotic statesmen, without participating in, or ministering to, the peculiarities of any party or sect ; its blessings falling upon

the children and the youth of the whole state, like the dew of heaven, upon the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the Catholic and the Protestant, upon every shade of religious and political opinion alike, without prejudice and without partiality."

IX.—THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH OF ROME.

Now it cannot be concealed, that all this opposition to the Bible in our schools, and to the common school system itself, on account of the Bible, springs from certain peculiar dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church ; which dogmas we hold to be as unscriptural as they are unreasonable and unpatriotic. We do not intend to discuss them now. But is it not clear to the plainest understanding, that the Church of Rome must feel herself to be in antagonism with the word of God, and condemned by the word God, when she fears to give that word to the people, and with the most persistent determination, seeks to exclude our glorious old common version from the common schools of the country ; nay, to exclude any and every version of it, even from her own children ? If she is not afraid of the light, why does she strive to keep the popular mind in darkness ? If she is not afraid that the "sincere milk of the word" will nourish her children and ours, to thoughts of religious liberty incompatible with her claims, why does she withhold that milk from the lambs of the flock ? If she feels confident of her infallibility and power, and in that consciousness has so little to fear from Protestantism, why is she in such dread of a free and open Bible ? Why not let the Bible take its way, as hitherto, in this free land ? If she is right, will not a free and open Bible advance her claims the more the people understand it ? If she is wrong, had she

not better let the Bible put her right? If she is afraid that the people will find Protestantism in our good old English Bible, or even in her Douay Bible, can't she make a Bible, or at least a translation of it, which she is not afraid to give to the people and to her own children? Half a loaf is better than no bread. The most imperfect translation is better than no Bible; even as Romanism itself is better than no religion.

If we could see the Church of Rome circulating any sort of a Bible among the masses of the people, we should hail it as the dawn of a better day. But does not the Church of Rome hold the Bible to be the revealed word of God? She does; and claims to be the very channel through which it has come down to us. Why then should a revelation from God be locked up from the people, imbedded forever like a fossil in the rocks? Admit that the Bible was early given to the Church of Rome as she claims, is it her grand mission to fossilize it under the mountains of her traditions on the plea of safe-keeping? The pyramids of Egypt might have kept it, in a mummy case, just as well. She might as well contend that God has authorized her to bury the sun, as to hide his word in the way she has done it. Her steadfast unwillingness to let the people have the Bible in their schools, is a demonstration as strong as Holy Writ, that she is in direct antagonism to the will of God, and to the whole letter and spirit of his word.

But this is not all. The determined opposition to the use of the Bible in the common schools of the country, is not more unscriptural than it is unpatriotic and unreasonable. For what is the object of all this opposition? The grand end in view, be it observed, is to conserve and promote the peculiar interests of this very peculiar church. To save this ancient church from the damage or the danger of being brought face to face with the

light of God's word in the presence of her children and of all men, so great a price must be paid, so great a sacrifice must be made, as the breaking up of the whole system of a united or common Christian education. Does not the highest interest of the whole country demand such an education? Yes. And does not every statesman in America feel, that the public weal requires that our children should be brought thus together into one grand universal system of education? Yes. How unreasonable and unpatriotic, then, that one particular class of Christians, merely for the sake of promoting their own denominational views, should so far sink their country's well-being as to demand the exclusion of a book, without which there can be no adequate Christian education, or else the surrender of a system without which there can be no united and general education at all! Would any Protestant sect thus venture to array its own peculiar ecclesiastical interests in direct antagonism with those of the nation whose protection it enjoys, and whose welfare it is bound to seek?

What is the Church of Rome, more than any other church, that she should claim the children of the state as her own; and not only so, but demand a separate provision out of the public funds for her intensely sectarian and exclusive schools? Would not such a demand from any Protestant body be resisted as unreasonable and unpatriotic? Is there no patriotism in American Romanism, no spirit of compromise, no statesmanship, no self-sacrifice on the altar of our common country? Is the spirit of Lord Baltimore gone from its councils? Is the illustrious name of Carroll no longer a watchword for enlarged liberality among its members? Have American Romanists ceased to be patriots by becoming churchmen? Have they sunk the citizen forever in the ecclesiastic? Have they adopted the maxim, "Millions for the church, but not a cent for the

country?" Is Rome everything, America nothing, in their policy? Have they no common interests with their Protestant fellow-citizens—no broad ground of humanity and religion, where they can stand together to teach morality and good citizenship on the basis of the revelation of God? Why should this extraordinary, and as it seems to us, infatuated devotion to one peculiar form of worship, be made to override every other interest of the country, and every great object which prompts the state to give intelligence and virtue to its children in public Christian schools! Can it be possible, that even here, in free, happy America, every lesson of morality, every sentiment of brotherhood, every bond of patriotism, nay, every great fundamental truth of our common Christianity, must be sacrificed upon the altar of a fierce fanatical zeal for church propagandism? Is the state nothing, the country nothing, its educational institutions nothing? Is the church the only institution in the land whose welfare is to be consulted, whose right and title to the child can stand? And has it come to this, that churchmen have no duties to discharge, no interests to subserve, but ecclesiastical duties and interests?

We would not willingly misrepresent the objects and aims of the Church of Rome; nor would we oppose them with any other weapons than those of truth and reason. But her opposition to the Bible, as the basis of education in this Christian land, and to the common public school system, we hold to be unreasonable, unpatriotic, and anti-American. There is no catholicity in her conduct. For what is she doing? What is it but to draw an eternal barrier between the children of Protestant and Catholic, spiked and defended, from the cradle to the grave, by an exclusive ecclesiastical education? What is it, but to pour the waters of sectarianism into all the fountains

of life, and thus destroy all hope of an enlarged public spirit and patriotism? It is a fearful responsibility which the Church of Rome has taken, in thus putting herself in antagonism, first with the word of God, and then with the progress of the age, and then with the great educational interest of our country. If this be the temper of the Church of Rome in America—this, the type of her patriotism—this, the character of her influence—this, the end and object of her existence—all men must see that she is utterly out of harmony with the progress of the age, and the spirit of our institutions. As such, she is evidently destined to one of two things—either to lose her influence more and more, or to amend her ways and let the word of God prevail.

But, perhaps you are ready to say, we have forgotten our profession of liberality, and entered the field of controversy. 'Tis not so, however. We think it no illiberality to oppose illiberality; and that narrow churchism, which wages war against the Bible and the common school system of our country, it is the duty of all good men to repudiate and denounce.

These remarks, upon one of the most vital questions of our times, which has already engaged public attention, and will probably engage it still more hereafter, cannot be deemed inappropriate in our present argument for the Bible. If there is any subject which we have deeply at heart, and on which we would desire to speak out, in a voice to be heard throughout the length and breadth of our land, it is our country's welfare, as connected with the common school and the Bible. We believe that our country's welfare, in all time to come, is bound up in this question. We hold the Bible to be the great light of education, as it is the light of the world; and education to be the life of our country. To exclude the

Bible from education, is to exclude the soul from the body, to shut out the sun-light from the world. It is to exclude the word of God from the works of God ; the intelligence and perfection of God from the rational and moral creatures of God. We hold, that as the world now stands, destitute of any other Divine revelation, the Bible is essential to the education of man ; that it is utterly impossible for the human race, anywhere, to produce a noble development of genius or character—a really great man—without the Bible. However we may explain, or account for the great characters of classical antiquity, it is manifest, that the stamen of humanity in our times is not sufficient of itself—enough of its original force, given at the creation, does not remain to produce a great nation, or even a single great man, without the Bible. It is manifest to every thoughtful student of the past, and close observer of the present, that if the Bible could be obliterated from Christendom, or even suppressed everywhere, as it now is in Papal countries, the human race would speedily go back into that barbarism from which the Bible has reclaimed it, and now alone saves it. Humanity, as the world now is, must be brought into individual contact with God, before it is capable of receiving anything good, or doing anything great. And without the Bible, no such contact or intercourse between God and man is now possible.

We stand up, then, for the schools of the country, and for the Bible in the schools, just as we should do if we had no connection with any church. We love Zion, and we expect to labor for Zion's welfare. But we love the country also. We have no interests and aims, as Christians, incompatible with the country's common weal. The state is ordained of God as well as the church. The duties, which bind us to the state as citizens and as patriots, are sacred, and form an important part

of our religion. We love and advocate the church schools of every grade, from the parochial to the theological seminary. We are friendly, also, to schools supported by private enterprise. Let all do what they can. There is room enough and work enough for all.

But we cannot lose sight of the fact, that, with all these in the field, there will still remain millions of children, whom no private, no denominational, and none but a state, or municipal free school, can ever reach. Whilst, therefore, as Christians, we establish, and, with all the resources within our power, sustain our own denominational institutions, we have no desire or intention to segregate ourselves or our churches from the common interests of our fellow-citizens, and the common schools of our country. No ; Protestants have a state to cherish as well as a church ; we are citizens and patriots, not less than Christians. With our fellow-Christians of all evangelical orders, we take a wider range, we repudiate that narrow churchism, which walls itself round with a fortress of fanaticism, and wages an implacable war against every interest but its own ; we stand, where we have ever stood—and where our fathers stood—by the country and its institutions—ITS COMMON SCHOOL AND ITS BIBLE.

X.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

And now, as we shall be able to travel with you over the pages of this wonderful book, sketching its deversified scenes and characters, noting its chief points of beauty and sublimity, unfolding its historical, biographical, literary and scientific attractions, we trust you will bear in mind one thing : and that is, we must not expect to understand everything, nor to find everything

beautiful and sublime, any more than we do in the world of nature. The world is worth seeing, and worth travelling over, although it may not be all attractive, or equally instructive. And so it is with the Bible. Let us ponder the striking and appropriate remarks of McCheyne :

“ He would be a sorry student of this world who should forever confine his gaze to the fruitful fields and well-watered gardens of this cultivated earth. He could have no true idea of what the world was, unless he had stood upon the rocks of our mountains, and seen the bleak muirs and mosses of our barren land ; unless he had paced the quarter-deck, when the vessel was out of sight of land, and seen the waste of waters without any shore upon the horizon.

“ Just so, he would be a sorry student of the Bible who would not know all that God has inspired ; who would not examine into the most barren chapters, to collect the good for which they were intended ; who would not strive to understand all the bloody battles which are chronicled, that he might find bread out of the eater and honey out of the lion.”

We must also bear in mind another thing, if we would rightly appreciate the Bible ; and that is the remarkable manner in which its utterances contain the undeveloped elements of all subsequent progress, even as the nut contains the kernel, or the seed the germ of life. This is one of the clearest marks of its Divine inspiration. There is everywhere a wisdom, wider and deeper than the words seem at first to convey—a wisdom often profound in exact proportion to the simplicity of the words. This is strikingly illustrated in all the New Testament writers ; but especially in the words of Christ, of whom in this, as in all other respects, it was most true, that “ never man spake like this man.” Says the learned Neander : “ Jesus

would not have been Son of God and Son of Man, had not his words, like his works, with all their adaption to the circumstances of the times, contained some things that are inexplicable—had they not borne concealed within them the germ of an infinite development, reserved for future ages to unfold. It is this feature—and all the evangelists concur in their representations of it—which distinguishes Christ from all other teachers of men. Advance as they may, they can never reach him.”

Indeed this profound, and far-reaching wisdom, which anticipates all subsequent advancement, and reveals a mind in harmony with truth and nature, is the truest test by which we can measure the greatness of our fellow-men. Lord Bacon could confidently appeal to the future and calmly commend his writings to the judgment of posterity. John Milton could do the same, not fearing that the world would suffer his immortal verse to die. The sententious wisdom of Shakspeare, not less than his dramatic genius, has made his utterances now for centuries the familiar household words of all who speak the English tongue. The same wisdom may be seen in Burke, in Dr. Johnson, in our own Franklin and Webster, indeed in all great thinkers. Living not alone for one age or generation, they are often in advance of their times, and are enabled so to speak and write that their words become the chosen vehicles of thought for all other men. But, in this respect, how do all the great master-minds of ancient and modern times fall into the background compared with Christ and the sacred writers! From Socrates and Plato to the present hour, many memorable sayings have been uttered, many eloquent passages recorded, which can never die. But where shall we find words so pregnant with meaning, and so incorporated into the thoughts of other men, as those

brief words of the Prayer, the Parables, the Conversations, and the public Discourses, of Jesus Christ ?

Amongst all the memorable things spoken by Napoleon Bonaparte, none is, perhaps, more remarkable than the following tribute to the gospel of Christ, given in a conversation with General Bertrand at St. Helena : “The gospel possesses a secret virtue of indescribable efficacy, a warmth which influences the understanding and softens the heart ; in meditating upon it you feel as you do in contemplating the heavens. The gospel is more than a book ; it is a living thing, active, powerful, overcoming every obstacle in its way. See, upon this table, this book of books (and here the Emperor touched it reverently) ; I never cease reading it, and always with new delight. Christ never hesitates, never varies in his instructions, and the least of his assertions is stamped with a sincerity and a depth, which captivate the ignorant and the learned if they give it their attention.”

If such words of praise from the world’s most wonderful man be deemed worthy of attention, how much more the words themselves whose divine attractions he seemed to feel !

CHAPTER II.

POETRY AND THE BARDS OF THE BIBLE.

Nature and Uses of Poetry in the Bible—Difference between Hebrew Prose and Poetry—Style of Hebrew Poetry, Parallelism—Spirit of Hebrew Poetry—Departments of Hebrew Poetry—Influence of Hebrew Poetry—Writers of Poetry in the Bible—The Seven Greater Bards—The Argument from Poetry—Concluding Remarks.

I.—THE NATURE AND USES OF POETRY IN THE BIBLE.

To a mind capable of appreciating the sublime and the beautiful, one of the highest literary attractions which the Bible presents, is its poetry. And as all educated persons are presumed to have a taste sufficiently cultivated to admire what is grand or beautiful, both in nature and in art, we could not easily find a theme, in the whole circle of sacred literature, whose announcement ought to be more popular and inviting than this—The Poetry and the Bards of the Bible.

Poetry is the highest style of human speech ; just as speech is the noblest vehicle of thought and feeling. Poetry is the language of human nature when it has found the sublime and beautiful—and not only found, but felt it, and sought to embody and express in numbers, those swelling conceptions which are too big for common words. It is the language of the soul, by which it seeks to rise above itself, to hold sympathetic and congenial brotherhood with all that is true and great, all that

is lovely and good in the universe around. It is the utterance of mortal man, when he feels the most immortal—when standing with his feet upon fields of living green, his eyes upon the blue fields of ether, he seeks to tell to his companions, on the earth and in the heavens, what he sees and what he feels—what worlds of joy, what visions of hope. It is the royal speech of high-born genius, striving to make known to others, in “thoughts that breathe and words that burn,” its own discovery and appreciation of the infinite, the eternal, the Divine. Hence poetry, in its highest style, is ever the language of the emotions and of the imagination—the sublime utterance of the heart’s truest best emotions, when quickened into life by the imagination, and borne away on winged words, to find a congenial home and resting-place with whatsoever is most grand and beautiful in the universe.

“As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing,
A local habitation and a name.”

So sings the bard of Avon ; and no one ever illustrated more strikingly than himself, the great truth of which he sings. If then, the plastic pen of poesy, thus wielded by the creative power of imagination, can do so much, even for “airy nothing,” what, think you, might it not do for the grand realities of life—the substantial, unfading, eternal verities of nature, man and God ?

Is it any wonder that when the Almighty had purposed to make a revelation to his children of things which they did not and could not know without it, of things relating to himself and to the eternal interests of the soul, such as truth

and virtue, life and death, heaven and hell, bliss and woe—and when it was determined that this revelation should be delivered by human tongues, recorded in a book and handed down for the reading of all generations to the end of time—is it any wonder, that holy men of old, speaking as they were moved by the Divine spirit, should speak on such themes in the sublimest language known to man—even the impassioned, universal, imperishable language of poesy? Indeed it would have been strange, had it been otherwise—strange if the book of God, had not been clothed in the brilliant burning words and images of heaven-born poetry: for if human language in any form is of Divine origin, who can doubt that the art of poetry, at the fountain-head, is Divine? Accordingly we find this most ancient of all books full of poetry; nay more, we find its very prose, where there are no poetic forms or numbers, often impregnated with a glowing poetic spirit, and adorned with the drapery of beautiful poetic images.

If you will examine the Bible by any just criterion as to the nature of prose and poetry, you will soon find that the Old Testament naturally falls under two grand divisions, in regard to its style. The first, embracing all the historical books, and extending from Genesis to the close of Esther, is written in narrative prose, with occasional odes and minor poems, ranging from a verse to a chapter in length, interwoven with the history, like jewels of precious stone in a coronal of gold. The second, reaching from Job to Malachi, and embracing all the writings of Job, David, Solomon and the prophets, is genuine poetry, both in its spirit and its style, with occasional pieces of historical prose, ranging from a verse to a few chapters in length, and interspersed through the whole, like the walks and borders in a garden of flowers—being thrown in for explana-

tion, as these are for convenience. Thus we have about as much narrative prose sprinkled over the poetical department, as there is of poetry in the historical department. And you will find, upon examination and comparison, that the division of poetry comprises more than one third of the Old Testament Scriptures.

As for the New Testament, it is for the most part historical and epistolary. Accordingly it is all written in a prosaic style, with the single exception of the Apocalypse, which being a prophetic and somewhat allegorical book, has all the sentiment and imagery of poetry, without the form of rhythm. The narrative and epistolary parts of the New Testament, however, like the prose division of the Old, are interspersed, though somewhat more sparsely, with occasional odes, and short poetic sentences—"disjecta membra poetæ!"

Now, lest any one should doubt the propriety of calling so large a portion of the Bible poetry, let us take a single passage from the prophetic books, as an illustration. Perhaps you have often read the fourth chapter of Jeremiah, without any thought that you were reading poetry. But tell us, what poet ever gave a more fearful and vivid picture of utter desolation, than the prophet has given of the land of Judah in the following words, taken just as they stand in our English version :

"I beheld the earth, and lo! it was without form and void!

And the heavens, and they had no light!

I beheld the mountains, and lo! they trembled!

And all the hills moved lightly!

I beheld, and lo! there was no man!

And all the birds of the heavens were fled!

I beheld, and lo! the fruitful place was a wilderness!

And all the cities thereof were broken down

At the presence of the Lord

And by his fierce anger."

This is only a small part of the description, but if this is not poetry of the highest order, then where will you find poetry, and what will you say constitutes a title to the name of poetry? You will accordingly find the prophetic books mostly poetical: and even in the historical books, you will find many occasional pieces of true poetry. Do you ask for some examples of these scattered members of the poem—these rare jewels of the coronal? In the New Testament, the most noted examples are the joyful odes of Elizabeth, Mary, and Zacharias on the occasion of our Saviour's approaching advent, the song of the angels at his birth, and that sublime strain of the Baptist from the wilderness, which seemed to echo, as from the long silent harps of the ancient prophets. In the Old Testament, you will find such examples, as David's dirge over Jonathan and Saul, and his lament for Absalom, Deborah's martial hymn of victory, Hannah's beautiful song of thanksgiving for Samuel, the ode of deliverance and triumph at the Red Sea, the farewell address of Moses to Israel on the borders of the promised land. You will find the elements of poetry in such brief phrases as this—"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," or this—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;" or still earlier in such as this—"Let there be light, and there was light." This last, which was pronounced by Longinus, the celebrated critic of Greece, to be one of the finest specimens of the sublime, we may safely claim as the most ancient line of poetry in the world: and certainly we do not know of any modern line, more pregnant with thought or beauty. Well might the patriarch of Uz, long afterwards, respond to this first divine utterance of poesy, as with a kindred spirit, saying—

"Then the morningstars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

If you ask, then, why poetry is employed in the Bible, we answer, because it is the natural and congenial language of the grand and glorious truths which it is the purpose of the Bible to reveal to us. We answer furthermore, it is in order to make the book the more attractive. The word of God is clothed in beauty, for the same reason that his works are beautiful. Just as the sky is blue, and the foliage green, and "the light, sweet to the eye," so does the Bible possess a universal and perpetual title to our admiration, by the attractiveness of its Divine poesy.

II.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROSE AND POETRY OF THE BIBLE.

But you may be ready to say, we see no distinction, at least, no marked distinction, between the poetry of the Bible and its prose—it seems to be all alike, all written in the same unmeasured prosaic form. You must, however, bear in mind, that it is solely through the medium of a prose translation, we now become acquainted with the poetry of the Bible. Even the few scholars who have read it in the original, had first learned to read it in a prose translation. Our English translators were great scholars, but they were not poets ; and they made no attempt to preserve anything of the poetic rhythm of the original Hebrew. They would probably have failed, had the attempt been made. They might have marred the beauty of the Hebrew muse, and done damage to the exact meaning of the sacred word, in trying to transfer it to a poetic English version. But had they, with all their learning and piety, possessed the poetic genius of Milton or Cowper, or even the nice poetic taste of Herder and Bishop Lowth, our present translation of Job, David

Solomon, and the prophets, would doubtless have retained much more of the original spirit and style of poetry.

Even as it is, notwithstanding the change from an ancient to a modern dress, and from an oriental to a western tongue, it is remarkable, that so much of the original fire of the Hebrew muse should still shine forth everywhere in our admirable prose translation. There is no stronger proof of the indestructible character of the poetry of the Bible, and of its inherent sublimity and beauty, than this fact, that through all the disadvantages and disguises of a literal prose translation, many passages of the poetical books, and nearly all the Psalms, still retain the spirit, and rhythm, and very music of the bard. Think of reading any other book of poetry under these circumstances ; think of reading Homer and Virgil, Milton and Shakspeare reduced down to a plain prose translation in another tongue. Could any other authors in the world, have stood such a disrobing as this—such a transmigration to foreign lands, and investiture in foreign costumes, and have come off half so well as the bards of the Bible have ? Their poems have been translated from a southern to a northern clime, from an eastern to a western world, have lived through all the winters of thirty or forty centuries, and though still incased within the uncongenial framework of a rigid prose version, are still poems, unsurpassed in power or pathos by any others in the world.

Why is this ? The reason is plain enough. It is because the living power of Bible poetry was in the thought more than in the outward form ; in the substance of nature more than in the shadow of art ; in the kernel of truth and not in the shell of mere words. It could pass through the crucible of a prose translation, and a strange tongue, undimmed of its lustre, because there was a soul in it—a living spirit of truth and beauty

in all its words and symbols—the very breath of heaven and inspiration of the Almighty. In all the bards of the Bible, from Moses to David, and from David to John, there was genius, the loftiest flight of sanctified human genius ; but then it must never be forgotten, that in them all there was something more than genius—there was the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Now that every one may see how marked is the distinction, between the poetry of the Bible and its prose, even in our English version, let us select an example from the book of Job, which has often been referred to, and which exhibits one of these sudden and striking transitions. The introductory part of the book, contained in its first and second chapters, is written in a plain narrative style and closes with the second verse of the third chapter, in the following words—“ So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him : for they saw that his grief was great. After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. And Job spake and said :”

“ Let the day perish wherein I was born
 And the night in which it was said, ‘ there is a man child conceived.
 Let that day be darkness :
 Let not God regard it from above,
 Neither let the light shine upon it.
 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it :
 Let a cloud dwell upon it ;
 Let the blackness of the day terrify it.
 As for that night, let darkness seize upon it ;
 Let it not be joined unto the days of the year ;
 Let it not come into the number of the months.
 Lo ! let that night be solitary ;
 Let no joyful voice come therein.
 Let them curse it, that curse the day,
 Who are ready to raise up their mourning.

Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark ;
Let it look for light, but have none ;
Neither let it see the dawning of the day.
Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb,
Nor hid sorrow from mine eyes."

In this passage, down to the point at which Job begins to speak, the language flows on in simple narrative, as it has done from the opening sentence of the book, never rising above the common prose level ; and no one could ever mistake it for poetry. But when Job speaks, how changed is the style in which he pours out the bitter anguish of his soul ! Who could ever mistake that remarkable curse for mere prose ? Who, that has a heart, does not feel that there is something in the tone, and sentiment, and imagery and rhythm of these burning words, far above any ordinary prose writing ? If you will examine Herder's translation of the passage, the contrast will appear still more striking than it does in our version. This, then, is enough to illustrate what kind of poetry the Bible contains, and to show how it rises and swells, with great thoughts and great emotions, above the ordinary level of historical narrative on the one hand, whilst on the other, there is a play of the imagination in its metaphors, and a stately correspondence and harmony in its sentences, placing it on a different ground altogether from even the most impassioned and eloquent declamatory prose. It is as far removed from anything that can rightfully be called oratory, as it is from simple narrative.

Who, for instance, can read a passage like this from the Psalms, without feeling that it is poetry ?—

" He bowed the heavens also, and came down :
And darkness was under his feet.
And he rode upon a cherub and did fly :
Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his secret place :
 His pavilion round about him were dark waters
 And thick clouds of the skies.
 At the brightness that was before him his thick cioucs passed,
 Hailstones and coals of fire.
 The Lord also thundered in the heavens,
 And the Highest gave his voice
 Hailstones and coals of fire.
 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them ;
 And he shot out lightnings and discomfited them.
 Then the channels of the waters were seen,
 The foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke,
 O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils."

Or this :

" Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?
 If I ascend up into heaven—Thou art there :
 If I make my bed in hell—behold Thou art there.
 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea :
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me,
 Even the night shall be light about me.
 Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee :
 But the night shineth as the day :
 The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

But perhaps you are ready to say, " How can there be poetry without verse ? and how can this be poetry without so much as the sound of poetry ?" You will say, there are no lofty hexameters here, like Homer's, and Virgil's ; no majestic, measured, tread of the blank verse, like Milton's ; no smooth-sounding rhyme, like Pope's ; no musical jingle of the feet, like the danc-

ing couplets of Burns and Byron, Moore and Scott. True, indeed ; but as for all that, is there no poetry in Shakspeare ? The objection lies against him in many passages, almost as strongly as it does against the bards of the Bible. You will not always find the regular hexameter and exactly measured blank verse, the tripping rhymes, the nimble feet, and jingling bells of modern poetry in Shakspeare, any more than in the Bible. It is no unusual thing to find him sacrificing the sound for the sake of the sense. But you will find in him, what is much more essential to the existence of true poetry—you will find originality and concentration of thought, the inexhaustible imagery of creative genius, the bright winged words of an eloquent tongue, and a soul fired with enthusiasm in view of the beauty and grandeur of universal nature.

And all this you will find in the bards of the Bible. You will find every essential element of genuine poetry. The only element which they appear to lack, is the sound : and to a rightly cultivated ear they do not even lack that. To say there is no poetry in the Bible, because there is no rhyme, no verse nicely measured by six feet of spondees and dactyls, no alternate movement of long and short syllables, is as absurd as to say there is no music in the roar of Niagara or the ocean, because their waves do not always keep the same time. It is to deny that a man has a soul within him, because he does not happen to be dressed in the fashion of the day.

Yes, notwithstanding the absence of everything like our modern versification, there is still in all the Hebrew poetry, as appears even in our prose translation, a regular rhythm of word with word, a studied harmony of thought with thought, a measured movement from line to line, which indicates that it might be, as we know much of it was, set to the music of the

instrument and the voice. And this harmony or rhythm, in thought and word, is the first and main criterion by which the poetry of the Bible may be easily distinguished from its prose both in English and in Hebrew.

III.—THE STYLE OF HEBREW POETRY—PARALLELISM.

This brings us to speak of the style, or outward form of Hebrew poetry ; and of its most peculiar and remarkable characteristic, which is the parallelism. Parallelism is the harmony or rhythm, produced by the correspondence of two or more clauses, or members of a passage with each other. It is a corresponding of two lines, or three, or even four, sometimes by way of resemblance and sometimes of contrast, in which word harmonizes with word, thought with thought, and sentence with sentence ; the one being the complement, or counterpart, or antithesis of the other. Verb answers verb, and noun answers noun—thought replies to thought and feeling to feeling, as the echo to the voice or as deep calling unto deep. This unique, and in many respects admirable, arrangement admits of manifold varieties, and in one form or other, runs through all the poetry of the Bible. The parallelism, however, lies more in the sense than in the sound. In this respect it differs from our English rhyme, which consists more in the sound than the sense. With us two lines or more of verse are made to correspond, simply by being cut of equal length, and coupled at the end by syllables which sound alike, almost regardless of the sense. But the Hebrew parallelism is a harmony of much higher order. It is the rhyme of reason. It is the harmony of thought. It is not the shallow music of symphonious letters ; but the deeper,

grander music of symphonious words and sentences and ideas. It is not the mere tying of two lines together by a syllable at the end, which may have as little concord, as two of Samson's foxes, when tied together by the tails with a fire-brand between ; but it is the rhyming of whole propositions, the intertwining and intermarrying of idea with idea in indissoluble, harmonious, happy bans. As a vehicle of poetry, the parallelism of the Bible, is to our modern rhymes, and indeed to the spondee and dactyls of the Greeks and Romans, what the deep-toned thunder of the organ would be to the whistle of an octave flute.

Now the several orders of parallelism, embracing as they do almost every sort of correspondence, comparison, contrast, and antithesis, as well as every degree of length from two words to a dozen, are so interchanged in the composition of Hebrew poetry as to give it an infinite life and variety—relieving it at once from the stiff elephantine tread of our blank verse and from the dull monotony of our rhyme. To use the illustrations of Herder, parallelism may be likened to two strings of pearl, not twisted into a garland, but simply hung up, the one over against the other. In lyric poetry it is like the waves of the sea, wave following upon wave, till all the heart swells with emotion. “In didactic poetry one precept confirms the other as if the father were giving instructions to his son, and the mother repeating it.”

In order to see with what pliability and life the parallelism may be adapted to every variety of subjects from grave to gay, let us take a few examples of an entirely opposite character. Let us select first a few couplets from the nineteenth Psalm, marking the exact correspondence of the alternate lines.

“The heavens declare the glory of God ;
 And the firmament showeth his handy work.
 Day unto day uttereth speech,
 And night unto night showeth knowledge.”

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ;
 The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart ;
 The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever :
 The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

Was there ever a more perfect adaptation of the music of words to the subject-matter of thought than this ? How slow, solemn, majestic is the movement in these lines, befitting the dignity and sacredness of the theme ! The sublime conceptions of the inspired bard, marching ever onward in heavy parallel columns, seem but to beat in unison with those revolving seasons and ordinances of heaven, which they essay to celebrate in words of human poesy. We might almost fancy that the “ silent music of the spheres ” had at last found utterance in the deep rhythm and harmony of these parallelisms.

But let us now turn to that joyous description of the advent of Spring, in the second chapter of Solomon’s Song, to see what this same parallelism can do with a gay and cheerful theme. Let us observe, with what gladsome voice, with what quick and nimble steps, and with what ardent love of the beautiful, it can move through the gayest scenes of nature. Let us see how easily, in these same double columns, it can pour forth the passions of a loving heart, responsive to everything that breathes of love in the natural world :

“ My beloved spake, and said unto me,
 Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away

For, lo! the winter is past,
 The rain is over and gone;
 The flowers appear on the earth;
 The time of the singing of birds is come,
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs.
 And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
 Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
 O my dove! that art in the clefts of the rock,
 In the secret places of the stairs,
 Let me see thy countenance,
 Let me hear thy voice;
 For sweet is thy voice,
 And thy countenance is comely."

One of the most beautiful forms of this parallel poetry, is that which is called the "Reiterative," in which the sense is continued through several lines, gaining strength as it advances, until some great truth stands forth in all its proportions. The first verse of the first Psalm is a familiar example of this; and a still more striking one is that memorable sentence of the wise man, which no young person should ever read without pondering well the fifth commandment—

 "The eye that mocketh at his father,
 And despiseth to obey his mother,
 The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
 And the young eagles shall eat it."

Another and still more remarkable form of this poetry is that which has been called the "Introverted," in which the thought works inward and outward in parallel lines, the sense reaching its climax, not at the end of a sentence as in the "Reiterative,"

but in the middle. Take a short example from the Fifty-first Psalm, instanced by Dr. Kitto.

“Have mercy upon me, O God,
 According to thy loving kindness,
 According unto the multitude of thy tender mercies
 Blot out my transgressions.”

Take a longer example from the hundred and thirty-fifth Psalm as given by the same—

“The idols of the heathen are silver and gold
 The work of men’s hands;
 They have mouths, but they speak not;
 They have eyes, but they see not;
 They have ears, but they hear not;
 Neither is there any breath in their mouths;
 They that make them are like unto them;
 So is every one that trusteth in them.”

This admirable and diversified parallelism, or thought-rhythm, as it is called by the more recent writers, is the most peculiar and indestructible characteristic of Hebrew verse; and, as is well remarked by Dr. Kitto, “this is a quality which is not lost in translation—is indeed scarcely affected by it, and is manifested in a book, designed to be translated into all the languages of the earth. While the metrical arrangements of the Greeks and Latins, as depending solely on the language, are quite lost by translation into another tongue, the rhythmical structure of the Hebrew poem is unimpaired by translation, the most literal rendering of the words preserving but the beauty of their poetic arrangement.”

IV.—THE SPIRIT OF HEBREW POETRY.

Passing now from the style to the subject-matter of Hebrew poetry, we may notice another of its distinguishing characteristics ; and that is its sacredness. Parallelism does not more strongly mark the diction, than an awful unapproachable spirit of holiness, the thought and sentiment of all the bards of the Bible on all subjects and on all occasions. This unbending sanctity of purpose pervades all their writings, great and small ; they seem to stand always, as in the very presence of Jehovah—the high priests of his temple, the interpreters of his oracles, the minstrels of his glory, the worshippers before his mercy-seat. They seem never to speak but with an inspiration coming down from the eternal throne, and a genius, whose lips have been touched with a live coal from heaven's own altar. The muse of the Bible, in all her strains and in all her flights, has no other purpose, save that of serving God—adoring God. Of him she sings—towards him she aspires—in him she delights :

“ Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.”

She sees and adores God in everything. To her all nature is vocal with God, from the burning seraphim of Heaven, down to the hyssop on the wall and the lily of the valley. He is alike the burden of her simplest and her loftiest song. Her soul was panting after God—the living God, when, with the mother of Samuel and the mother of Jesus, she poured forth her humble but grateful anthems of praise ; and in search of that God, upborne on the wings of imagination, she soared to the highest heavens, with Job and David and Isaiah.

“She passed the flaming bounds of space and time,
The azure throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble as they gaze.”

Says Gilfillan, “she has no atheistic music, like Lucretius, to be played off on the dry bones of a dead and Godless universe.” Nor has she any talents angel-bright, like the school of Byron and Moore, to prostitute to the low business of filling the world with siren songs of sensuality—the base cravings of a morbid imagination, and the maniac ravings of unbridled passion. Nor has she any pent-up fires of genius to burn out for naught, like Shelley, sitting solitary and hopeless on the dismal, wretched, shores of that gulf of chaos and old night into which infidelity and skepticism would like to sink the world. Ah no! with her all is life—all is beauty—all is hope—all is radiant with glory—all is pregnant with immortality—all is vocal with praise, for God is ever with her, and “God is all in all.”

“It is hardly too much to say,” says the author just referred to, “that the poetic genius of the Hebrew race was kindled at the fires of Sinai.” Nay, that is hardly enough to say. We may give to Hebrew poesy an earlier origin than Sinai’s fires. We may trace her nativity back to the garden of Eden. She is the eldest daughter of human literature. Her genealogy ascends to Divine inspiration. To the language of man, she holds a relation akin to that which Eve held to Adam. Should we impersonate and describe her, as a historical character, her heraldry might be thus recorded: Born amid the bright visions of a new-created world, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; trained up from infancy in the knowledge of all the wonders of creation, of providence, of prophecy and of miracle; fed, now on angel’s food in the wilderness, and now on the milk and honey of the

promised land ; indoctrinated into the sublime mysteries of that law which God's own finger wrote—she received a nurture and a discipline, such as formed no part of the education of any other national poetic muse. During all her early years, she played familiar with the giants of the earth, and the angels of God. The rainbow of Noah, the Leviathan and Behemoth of Job, the fiery and cloudy pillars of the Exodus, the thunders and lightnings of Sinai, the waters of the Deluge, the Red Sea and the Jordan, the swords of Joshua, and Gideon, the timbrels of Miriam and Deborah, the sun over Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon—all formed material for her young thoughts. These were her daily meditations, her companions and instructors, until she reached her full orb'd maturity of strength and beauty, and sat down upon the throne of David and Solomon, to reign forever as the crowned and unrivalled queen of song. And from that ancient hill of Zion—the highest mount of canonized bards—that throne of genius and of inspiration “fast by the oracle of God,” she touched her harp—“the harp, the monarch minstrel swept,” and sounded forth to heaven and earth a strain of power and beauty which has been reverberating around the globe till David's harp grows mightier than his throne—a strain of glory which the dwellers in the vales and on the mountain-tops of all nations have heard with rapture, or are yet to hear.

Hebrew poetry is not only the oldest in the world, but from first to last it has been the handmaid of religion. Holiness to the Lord has been impressed on every line of it, and its whole subject-matter impregnated with the hallowed spirit of truth and virtue. “This poetry” says Dr. Kitto, “is one of the many utterances of that which was unique in itself, and peculiar to ancient Israel. And just as all the noblest powers

and contests of this chosen people, were chiefly directed to the one object of striving for the true God and the true religion, in like manner, their poetry also had no other way of becoming great and unique, than in this sole tendency to the sublime, nor to develop all its powers except in this movement after God. Ancient Hebrew poetry remained, as to its main essence an interpreter of those high thoughts and sublime conceptions which never in antiquity exercised such an influence anywhere else."

On this point, Gilfillan, in his "Bards of the Bible," makes the following appropriate remarks—"The Hebrew poet was nothing if not sacred. To him the poetical and the religious were almost the same. Song was the form instinctively assumed by all the higher moods of his worship. He was not surprised into religious emotion and poetry by the influence of circumstances, nor stung into it by the pressure of remorse. He was not religious only when the organ was playing, nor most so, like Burns and Byron, on a sunshiny day. Religion was with him a habitual feeling, and from the joy or the agony of that feeling poetry broke out irrepressibly. To him, the question, "Are you in a religious mood to-day?" had been as absurd as 'Are you alive to-day?' for all his moods, whether high as heaven, or low as hell, whether wretched as the penitence of David, or triumphant as the rapture of Isaiah, were tinged with the religious element. From God he sank, or up to God he soared. The grand theocracy around ruled all the soul, and all the song of the Bard. Wherever he stood, under the silent starry canopy, or in the congregation of the faithful, musing in solitary spots, or smiting with rebounding hand the loud cymbal, his feeling was—'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this the very gate of heaven!' Hence the sacred song of the Hebrews stands alone: and hence

we may draw the deduction, that its equal we shall never see again, till again religion enshrine the earth as it once enshrined the Holy Land."

V.—DEPARTMENTS OF HEBREW POETRY.

But from these two chief characteristics of the Poetry of the Bible—the one relating to its style or diction and the other to its spirit and subject-matter, let us now pass on, to speak of its several forms or departments. All poetry may be comprised under four grand divisions, leaving out of view for the present many subdivisions. And each of these four divisions, though in very unequal proportions, is represented in the Bible.

The first, which is also the earliest in the order of time, is the Lyric : that is, poetry to be sung or played, for the most part expressive of the emotions and passions, and adapted to the music of instrument or voice. This includes the varied forms of ballad, ode, hymn and chorus. Anacreon and Sappho among the Greeks, Horace among the Latins, and Burns in modern times, excelled in this department.

The second class is the Dramatic : that is, poetry representing human life in all its phases, and accommodated to action—poetry not to be sung or played, but to be acted out as a picture of real life. In this department we have Sophocles and Euripides in Greek : but Shakspeare is the most distinguished example in the annals of literature.

The third kind is the Didactic or Proverbial : that is, poetry of a sententious and preceptive cast, addressed to the feelings chiefly through the judgment, and intended to convey instruction to the mind: as, for example, in Young's "Night Thoughts." This class includes all descriptive poetry, not comprised in the

other divisions : such as Cowper's "Task" and Thomson's "Seasons."

The fourth division is the Epic or Heroic poem, which narrates or recites, in elevated style, a continuous series of events or actions, true or fictitious, historical or imaginary, in such a manner as to teach some great moral, or celebrate some august personage : as, for instance, the "Iliad" of Homer, the "Æneid" of Virgil, the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Tasso, the "Divina Commedia" of Dante and the "Paradise Lost" of Milton.

Now, the bards of the Bible have surpassed all others, in at least two of these departments—the Lyric and the Didactic : the Lyric as represented in the book of Psalms, and the Didactic as represented in the book of Proverbs. And in descriptive didactic poetry, we might regard Job, Isaiah, and the prophets generally, as standing at the head of the list, if they did not fall more naturally under other departments. It must be conceded, that there is nothing in ancient or modern literature, which, for proverbial, sententious wisdom, and deep insight into human character, can be put in comparison with the poetry of Solomon. And as for description, where will you find any description of the works of God or man—any portraying of the scenery of the heavens and the earth, which can equal the bold, life-like pictures of Ezekiel, Isaiah and Job. At the distance of twenty or thirty centuries, these still shine through the night of past ages, as stars of the first magnitude. Upon a canvas, whose background envelops in a cloud of oblivion all contemporaneous products of uninspired genius, these grand delineations of the patriarch of Uz still stand out in all their original brightness and beauty, as if they had been painted with the pencil of the sunlight, from "colors dipped in heaven."

But it is in the department of Lyric poetry, that the Hebrew

muse attains her highest triumphs, and stands to this day without a rival in the history of literature. Whether we regard the Psalms as national ballads, designed to inspire the Jewish people with patriotic enthusiasm, and the love of glory, or view them as religious odes adapted to raise the devotions of the nation in holy gratitude to the God of their fathers—in either case they stand confessedly unequalled, unapproached by the odes or ballads of any other age or nation. In the chaste and simple grandeur of their diction and imagery, in the mingled sublimity and pathos of their sentiment, in the stern and immaculate purity of their moral tone, in the deep, abiding impression which they made upon the whole Israelitish mind through centuries of prosperity and adversity, and in the untold influence which they have exercised over every nation of the civilized world down to the present day, they never had any fair competitor, much less any equal.

In the other two departments of poetry—the Dramatic and the Epic—it is acknowledged, that the bards of the Bible have not given us the same finished models. The composition of the Drama and the Epic, requiring more art and invention than the others, was uncongenial to the truth-loving spirit of Hebrew poesy. In these, the muses of Greece and Rome and all the great modern nations attained their highest flight and sung their noblest, sweetest song. But the muse of the Bible, being at once the early expounder of nature, when she appeared “unindebted to the tricks of art,” and the inspired oracle of God to teach man wisdom, chose the ballad and the proverb, as her most appropriate vehicles: and accordingly we find no great Epic, like Milton’s, nor finished Dramas, like Shakspeare’s.

The fictitious history or novel, which constitutes the basis of the great Epic, and the stage, with all its cumbrous artistic

machinery, constituting the basis of the Drama, were things unknown among the Jews, until they were borrowed from the Romans, and introduced by that half pagan, Herod the Great. The muse of Hebrew poesy was always too truthful and holy to introduce anything like the stage, or anything nearer the novel than a simple parable or allegory

Still there is one important consideration, in reference to this point, which must not be overlooked. Though the Bible contains no great epic, like the "Iliad," and no great drama, like "King Lear" or "Hamlet," still it contains much noble poetry of an Epic and Dramatic character. It is full of the germs—the seed-thoughts of great epics and dramas. It gives us short epics, which recite a true history and delineate a real hero. It sets before us sublime dramas, written for no stage but the stage of real life, and arranged for the scenery of no theatre, but the grand theatre of heaven and earth and hell.

For example, it is generally agreed amongst Bible critics, that the "Canticles," or "Song of Solomon," whilst it has all the elements of a lyric and pastoral poem, is also a drama, complete even to the chorus, in all its parts, and intended to represent vividly the relation between Christ and his beautiful Bride the Church, under the imagery of a recently married husband and wife. As to the poetical character of the book of Job, there has been a diversity of opinions among eminent judges. It is said that Daniel Webster regarded it as an epic—the most magnificent to be found in human literature. But the most commonly received opinion, among Biblical scholars, is, that it is more of a drama than an epic. Whilst it is in many respects a didactic descriptive poem, and whilst it contains many of the essential elements of an epic poem, it seems to be more accurately described as a historical drama—the

oldest and the sublimest ever written, embracing a panorama of universal nature, material and spiritual, animate and inanimate, ranging from arch-angel fallen to the Deity, and containing a grand dialogue between Satan, Man and God, whose scenes are laid alternately in heaven and earth, whose denouement is the vindication of the patriarch by the intervention of Jehovah, and whose great moral design is to "assert eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men."

Be this as it may ; Miriam's song at the Red Sea, and Deborah's war-song, contain as in a nutshell the elements of epic poems, recounting real and heroic deeds. Moses' Farewell to Israel is another and longer epic, and might be expanded even now into a grand national epic, far more wonderful and glorious than the *Æneid* of Virgil. Many of the Psalms, in imitation of this address, are little epic poems, celebrating the mighty acts of Jehovah, when he led his people through the waters and the wilderness. And what shall we say of the later prophecies of Isaiah, running from the fortieth chapter to the end of the book in one unbroken and exalted strain ? What shall we call this, but one grand prophetic epic, whose suffering but conquering hero is the Messiah of Israel, whose story is the ever onward progress of Christianity, and whose sublime moral climax is the millennial glory of a world, redeemed, purified, and prepared for God ?

VI.—THE INFLUENCE OF HEBREW POETRY.

If, however, we would do full justice to the Poetry of the Bible, we must measure it, not merely by what it has done directly itself, but by what it has enabled others to do ; we must take into consideration not only its own finished productions, but also the materials it has furnished, and the vast

influence it has thus exerted upon the productions of the world's genius, whose fires, for two thousand years, have been kindled at its altars. The Bible, as we have seen, not only contains the highest models of lyric and didactic poetry, and also no mean specimens both of dramatic and epic poetry; but, what is most important to observe, it has furnished the material, of fact, of sentiment and of doctrine, out of which the greatest epic poems of modern times have been framed. Their seed thoughts, their characters, their imagery, their illustrations, their grand moral, their religious basis, their whole conception, have been borrowed from, or suggested by the Bible. In whatever the moderns have differed from, or excelled the ancients in poetry, it is the Bible that has helped them to the distinction and enabled them to achieve the victory. If you could take out of the literature of modern nations, all that the Bible has put into it, there would not be a shred of glory left, on which to claim preëminence over classical antiquity. And the same is true of our science, our religion, and civilization, as well as our poetry. If then Dante, and Tasso, and Milton have written grander epics than Moses, David, and Isaiah, it is by the help of the materials which the Bible has put into their hands, that they have thus been able to surpass the Bible, whilst they surpass the ancient classical authors. Thus fostered by the Bible, they may virtually be claimed as bards of the Bible. Who would ever have heard of "Paradise Lost" or "Paradise Regained," had there been no Bible? Where else could Milton's muse have found such food for thought, and such themes for inspiration? And what are these poems, after all, but a reproduction, and a liberal paraphrase, and a new translation of the Bible, couched in harmonious immortal numbers?

Some critics have entertained the opinion, that there can never be another great epic poem written: never shall another Homer or another Milton sing, because all original themes are exhausted, and all heroic materials used up. We are inclined to think otherwise. Far down the course of time, it may be, in the golden age of millennial glory, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the world, and all nations walk in the light of his countenance, when the mysteries of the past shall have been solved, and all the ways of providence fully vindicated, then shall the last grand epic of Redemption be sung in sweeter and sublimer strains than any that have yet been heard. But mark it now, and write it as a memorial for the future; whenever that day of glory shall dawn upon the earth—whenever that loftier Milton shall arise, and that diviner minstrel than he of Chios, shall tune his harp for the last great effort of poetic genius, it will be this Bible which shall inspire his muse, and furnish both the material and the moral of his song.

It has been said that, “Homer gave a mythology to antiquity, and the fine arts to all the modern nations,” so that, for nearly three thousand years, the world has only been borrowing from his pages, as the great storehouse of genius. In like manner the Bible has given to the world a religion, and along with that religion, an inexhaustible treasury of historic fact, of poetic imagery, and of sublime conception, which the great masters of all ages have been expanding and reproducing, with endless variety, in every walk of art and literature. Says an eminent scholar, in “Kitto’s Cyclopædia:” “Of all intellectual, literary, and moral treasures, the Bible is incomparably the richest. Even for those forms of poetry in which it is defective, it presents the richest materials. Moses, has not, as some have dreamed, left us an epic poem: but he has supplied the mate-

rials, out of which the "Paradise Lost" was created. Milton's sternly sublime drama of "Samson Agonistes," is constructed from a few materials found in a chapter or two, which relate to the least cultivated period of the Hebrew Republic. Indeed most of the great poets, even of modern days, from Tasso down to Byron; all the great musicians and nearly all the great painters, have drawn their best and highest inspirations from the Bible. This is a fact, as creditable to religion as it is important to literature, of which he who is fully aware will not easily be turned aside from faith to infidelity, by the shallow sarcasms of a Voltaire, or the low ribaldry of a Paine. That book, which has led civilization, and formed the noblest minds of our race, is not destined to be disowned for a few real or apparent chronological inaccuracies; or because it presents states of society and modes of thought, the very existence of which, however half-witted unbelief may object, is the best pledge of its reality and truth."

Dr. Spring, in his "Obligations of the World to the Bible," has some admirable remarks on the same point: "There is not a finer character, nor a finer description in all the works of Walter Scott, than that of Rebekah in *Ivanhoe*. And who does not see, that it owes its excellence to the Bible? Shakspeare, Byron and Southey are not a little indebted for some of their best scenes and inspirations to the same source." And then he goes on to point out the parallels, between Macbeth and Ahab, Lady Macbeth and Jezebel, Jeremiah's Lamentations over Jerusalem and Byron's apostrophe to Rome as the Niobe of nations, his ode to Napoleon, and Isaiah's ode on the fall of the King of Babylon; and other parallels, showing how greatly even profane and sometimes unbelieving writers are indebted to the book of God.

VII.—THE WRITERS OF HEBREW POETRY.

But it is time for us to pass to another topic. From these several departments of Hebrew poesy—lyric, didactic, dramatic, and epic—containing either finished poems, or the materials for great poems of each class, let us turn now to take a brief survey of its several authors—the bards themselves. Thus shall we have at one view the whole field of Bible poetry, in its style, sentiment, influence, subjects, forms and authors.

The whole number of persons mentioned in the Bible, as having written or spoken in poetry of their own composition, and therefore entitled to the name of bard, is about thirty. Of these the great majority are the authors of short odes, or occasional pieces, minor poems and prophecies. The distinguished bards of the Bible however, that give character to its poetry and tower above all their compeers, by the length and dignity of their productions, are the seven following : Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. For although Moses did not write much poetry—indeed not so much as some of the minor prophets, yet, as he stood for many generations, almost the only bard of Israel, he deserves a place amongst the distinguished seven.

It must not, however, be supposed, that those whom we here rank as the less distinguished, are at all inferior in poetic genius to the others. So far from it are they, that we find not unfrequently in these little poems, or fragments of poems, passages of sublimity, power and pathos, equal to anything in the Bible. Such for example, are some of the Psalms of Asaph, such are many parts of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Nahum and Micah. Such

especially are the war-song of Deborah and the awfully sublime prayer or ode of Habakkuk.

Let us pause a moment to consider these two, as specimens from the minor poets. In Deborah, the martial spirit of the Hebrew race seems to have found its second grand utterance in song ; that of Moses at the Red Sea being the first. Never did the female heart in any land or in any age, burn with brighter and fiercer fires of patriotic enthusiasm and religious devotion. She was the very incarnation of the heroic spirit. The famous Marseilles Hymn of Liberty sounds dull and tame, placed beside the trumpet-tongued notes of her song. With an epic and a tragic power, which in its condensation almost defies comparison, she sets the battle in array before us, as though we heard the tramping of its mighty hosts, and mingled in all its din and fury. In recounting this triumph of Jehovah over the enemies of her country, she summons all creation, not only to share in the shouts of victory, but to rush into the thickest of the fight, as if the "curse of Meroz" should rest upon every soul that refused to take part in the conflict.

As the poem opens, we seem to hear the very watchword and battle-cry of the advancing array, in the apostrophic words :—

"Arouse thee! arouse thee! Deborah!
 Awake! awake! give a song of triumph!
 Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive,
 Thou son of Abinoam!"

And then suddenly, princes and people, governors and nobles, horses and mighty ones, tribe after tribe in successive onsets, rush to the high places of the field, "to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty." Inanimate nature seems to participate in the contest. "The stars in their courses

fight from heaven against Sisera." "The river Kishon, that, ancient river, Kishon sweeps them away," as it bears down the invaders of Israel in carnage to the sea: whilst above the din and conflict of the conquering and the flying hosts, we seem to hear the voice of the heroic prophet-bard, who had herself been the chief human agent in raising all this storm, crying—"O my soul! thou hast trodden down strength!"

What is Campbell's "Hohenlinden," or Scott's "Flodden Field" or any battle scene, of equal length, in Homer and Virgil, compared with this impassioned dramatic description? And yet perhaps there are many readers and admirers of fine poetry, who have not discovered that there is any sublime poetry in the Bible. Now if you will study carefully the fifth chapter of the Book of Judges, with the aid of all the translations you can find, you may come to the conclusion, that there is not, in the works of literature, so far as you have explored them, a single martial ode equal to Deborah's.

In the book of Habakkuk we have another ode equally sublime, but of an entirely different character. It is a prayer, and at the same time a descriptive ode of very peculiar character. It represents Jehovah as seen in history. It describes the God of providence, as a conquering hero, ever marching onward, with invincible power, through the whole cycle of Jewish history, from the promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai, to the prophet's own times. Consequently its materials of facts and imagery are derived, not from any particular event or date, but from the events of some thousand years. The historic bard looks out from his lonely watch-tower—he lifts his heart to heaven in holy midnight meditations—he casts his thoughts back into the shadowy distance of the past—he groups together the prominent signs and wonders of a thousand

years—with quivering fingers he sweeps every chord known to the diapason of David's harp, and prepares for his last grand anthem to Jehovah's glory. Imagine, if you can, a staff and a scale, and an anthem, whose key-note should be the deep heaving voice of the sea, whose tenor the unceasing roar of the thunder, whose bass the rumbling earthquake, whose harmonious movement the music of the spheres, while the whirlwind and the cataract, the volcano and the waterspout swell the mighty chorus—and you have the only adequate musical expression for the prophet's words and emotions in the following inspired and awe-inspiring ode, which we give in our common version, except in a few lines taken from Herder's translation :

God came from Teman,
 And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.
 His glory covered the heavens,
 And the earth was full of his praise.
 His brightness was like the sun,
 And from his hand the rays shot forth ;
 And there was the hiding of his power.
 Before him went the pestilence,
 And burning coals went forth at his feet.
 He stood, and measured the earth ;
 He beheld, and drove asunder the nations ;
 And the everlasting mountains were scattered ;
 The perpetual hills did bow ;
 His ways are everlasting.
 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction ;
 The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.
 Was the Lord displeased against the rivers ?
 Was thine anger against the rivers ?
 Was thy wrath against the sea ?
 That thou didst ride upon thy horses,
 And thy chariots of salvation ?

Thou drewest forth thy bow
Multiplying seven-fold thine arrows. Selah.
Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers.
The mountains saw thee, and they trembled ;
The overflowing of the waters passed by ;
The deep uttered his voice,
And lifted up his hands on high.
The sun and moon stood still in their habitation ;
At the light of thine arrows they went,
And at the shining of thy glittering spear.
Thou didst march through the land in indignation.
Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.
Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people,
Even for salvation with thine anointed.
Thou didst smite the top from the house of the wicked,
And lay bare the foundation even to the rock. Selah.
Thou piercedst the head of the leader of their ranks.
They came out as a whirlwind to scatter me ;
Their rejoicing was to devour the poor secretly.
Thou didst walk through the sea with thy horses,
Through the heap of great waters."

What is Gray's "Elegy," or Pope's "Universal Hymn," or Coleridge's sunrise hymn in the vale of Chamouny, sublime as it is, compared with this? Each sentence here is a picture to be studied. Each line is a new door for the imagination, opening into the third heavens of sublimity. You may search the annals of literature, ancient and modern, and if you can find anything in the same compass, equal to the splendid imagery and majestic movement of this divine ode, we will acknowledge, for the first time, that the Bible is not the highest standard of taste and genius, and of the divine art of poesy.

VIII.—THE SEVEN GREATER BARDS OF THE BIBLE

But if the superiority of the Bible can be maintained with regard to these, its minor bards, what shall we say of those immortal seven who have been called the “giant angels of Hebrew song?” We cannot speak of all of them now, nor of any of them at much length. Of three out of the seven, however, we must give a brief and passing sketch for the completeness of our subject. These are Moses, Job, and David. The other four, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, will come before us, hereafter, in other relations.

To Moses belongs the authorship of three magnificent poems—and these almost the earliest products of the poetic muse. His fame, as the first of historians, is entwined with the graceful garlands of virgin poesy. The first is that “Psalm of Moses, the man of God,” on the frailty of human life, and the care of Divine providence—the 90th in the collection—which stands, between the two great divisions of the book, as its central and most ancient column. “This” says Dr. J. A. Alexander, “may be regarded as the heart or centre of the whole collection, and indeed, as the model upon which, even David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, formed that glorious body of psalmodic literature or hymnology, which, with its later but inspired and authoritative imitations, constitutes the present Book of Psalms.” The second is that sublime song of deliverance and triumph, which was sung at the Red Sea, when Israel saw the Egyptians “sink like lead in the mighty waters”—when Miriam and all the women of Israel, sounding loud their timbrels over Egypt’s dark sea, responded in the lofty chorus which the men had raised :

“Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously,
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

The third and longest poem of Moses is his valedictory song, delivered to the chosen people a little before his death, and recorded at the close of the book of Deuteronomy. It opens with the following impassioned, and beautiful invocation :

“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak:
And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.
My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My speech shall distill as the dew,
As the small rain upon the tender herb,
And as the showers upon the grass.”

And then, after recounting the glories of Israel, and the wonderful works of Jehovah, the manifold blessing of allegiance, and the fearful consequences of apostasy, he closes with an apostrophe in perfect keeping with the introduction :

“Rejoice, O ye nations with his people:
For he will avenge the blood of his servants,
And will render vengeance to his adversaries,
And will be merciful to his land and to his people.”

But besides these productions of his own muse, Moses has also recorded for us, what may be regarded as one of the most remarkable of all the curiosities of literature. It is the song of Lamech to his wives, Adah and Zillah, in the fourth chapter of Genesis. This is the only piece of antediluvian poetry in existence, being beyond all comparison the oldest in the world, unless we regard the prophecy of Enoch in the epistle of Jude as also poetic. It is worthy of notice, that the two pieces belong to the very same epoch. For Enoch, the author of the

prophecy, was the seventh from Adam through the line of Seth, while Lamech, the author of the song, was also the seventh from Adam through the line of Cain. One of Lamech's sons, we are told, was the "father of such as handle the harp and organ : " and thus, most appropriately, we find the first mention of instrumental music, in immediate connection with the first notice of poetry in the world. The song of Lamech seems to be a fragment, taken by Moses probably from a longer poem, which had been handed down to his times by tradition : just as the prophecy of Enoch must have come down from the same age to the far more remote days of St. Jude.

Herder, in his "Spirit of Hebrew Poetry," calls it the song of the sword, and thinks it was composed and sung by Lamech, on the invention of that weapon. He deems it descriptive, not of what Lamech had done, but of what he might do, to his foes, with this newly invented and formidable weapon. He translates it thus :

"Ye wives of Lamech, hear my voice
And hearken to my speech.
I slew a man who wounded me,
A youth, who smote me with a blow ;
If Cain shall be seven times avenged,
Then Lamech seventy times seven."

If this be the correct view, it would really seem that Lamech's song was no empty boast, but was almost prophetic of what the sword has done in the world. Herder regards it as the most ancient of poems, proving to him that lyric poetry and music arose in the same age, and indeed in the same family, and as mother and daughter they have been joined together ever since.

But Job ! what shall we say of Job—the Leviathan of Hebrew song—the patriarch of the age of poesy—the most

venerable and hoary of all the bards of the Bible, compared with whom Milton, in his old age and blindness, was but as a boy of yesterday ! As he rises up to our imagination from the depths of antiquity, we think of a stately and solitary palm tree on the border of some vast desert, or of some lone tower of strength and beauty standing in the midst of mouldering ruins, or of mount Sinai towering in stern grandeur above the wilderness. Dr. Kitto says "the book of Job, belongs to no class ; it is a class by itself ; there is none like it in ancient or modern literature." It is impossible that anything in literature should be more sublime than the book of Job ; because it is impossible to find a sublimer theme than God in nature, and the book of Job is alike true to God and true to nature in her sublimest moods.

We will, however, pass over all its grand and glowing descriptions of the mighty works of God, as seen in heaven and earth, sea and sky ; and present you with a single passage of a different kind—a passage which we regard as a perfect model of the beautiful—a passage blending at once the beauties of classic diction, of poetic imagery, and of moral sentiment, which are the highest elements of beauty in a poem. It is the portraiture of the Patriarch's own character in the days of his prosperity, when he had the testimony of the Almighty that there was "none like him in the earth," "a perfect man and an upright, one who feared God and eschewed evil." It is remarkable to find such a delineation of character—abounding in the most delicate and exquisite touches of pathos and beauty—in a poet, whose muse is accustomed to soar on eagle's wings, above the clouds, to gaze on dazzling grandeur with an eagle's eye, and to claim the highest heaven of sublimity as her native home. You will observe, too, how the poetry shines out through

the veil of a prose translation, for we give it in the words of our common version :

“ Oh that I were as in months past,
 As in the days when God preserved me ;
 When his candle shined upon my head,
 And by his light I walked through darkness ;
 As I was in the days of my youth,
 When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle :
 When the Almighty was yet with me.
 When my children were about me ;
 When I washed my steps with butter,
 And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.

“ When I went out to the gate through the city,
 When I prepared my seat in the street ;
 The young men saw me and hid themselves,
 And the aged arose and stood up.
 The princes refrained from talking,
 And laid their hand upon their mouth ;
 The nobles held their peace
 And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.
 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me ;
 And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.

“ Because I delivered the poor that cried—
 The fatherless that had none to help him.
 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,
 And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
 I put on righteousness and it clothed me ;
 My judgment was as a robe and a diadem.
 I was eyes to the blind,
 And feet was I to the lame.
 I was a father to the poor,
 And the cause which I knew not I searched out.
 And I brake the jaws of the wicked,
 And plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

"Then I said I shall die in my nest,
 And I shall multiply my days as the sand.
 My root was spread out by the waters,
 And the dew lay all night upon my branch.
 My glory was fresh within me,
 And my bow was renewed in my hand.
 Unto me men gave ear and waited,
 And kept silence at my counsel.
 After my words they spake not again;
 And my speech dropped upon them;
 And they waited for me as for the rain,
 They opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.
 If I laughed on them, they believed it not,
 And the light of my countenance they cast not down.
 I chose out their way and sat chief,
 And dwelt as a king in the army,
 As one that comforteth the mourners."

Now the peculiar excellence of this poetry is, that, though it is soft and plaintive as a lute, its music, lying deeper than the mere words, never wearies the ear, its sweetness never cloy the taste. You may read it a hundred times, and you will find more to admire on the hundredth than on the first perusal. But we cannot linger longer on this magnificent poet. We must turn from Job; and we do it by quoting a passage from the lectures of Dr. Turner in the *Biblical Repository*—"In no other composition extant is there so much of the true sublime, and of magnificent simplicity, as reign through the latter part of the book of Job. A judge competent to determine the comparative merits of the literature of various countries, has given his decided opinion in favor of this work. 'It is a piece of writing,' says the accomplished Frederic Schlegel, 'which, considered merely as such, is without doubt one of the most characteristic and sublime, which has come down to us from the ancient world.'"

Let us now come to David, the "monarch minstrel"—the last in our present order, though not the least of the Hebrew bards. In him the lyric poetry of the Bible, and we may well say, of the ancient world, reached its zenith. There is a power of expression, a tenderness of feeling, a devotion of the spirit, a depth and compass of experience, a soul-stirring divinity, in all the strains of the sweet psalmist of Israel, which nothing else has ever equalled, and beyond which nothing will ever be able to go. For thirty centuries the people and church of God in many lands have been singing the lyrics of David, feeling that he is their greatest, because he is their divinely inspired minstrel.

David's lamentation for Jonathan, sometimes called the "Song of the Bow" from its repeated allusions to that important weapon of ancient warfare, is one of the most touching and beautiful things to be found in elegiac poetry. We may quote it from our common version in another place: but let us recite a few lines of it now from the somewhat liberal translation of Herder, in order to show you how easy a thing it is by a few verbal changes, not affecting the sense at all, to adapt this prose-like poetry of the Bible to our modern ears. Surely no one can deny, that we have here the pathos, the imagery, and the very sound of poetry.

"Beautiful Roe, thou pride and glory of Israel!
Thus then art thou wounded upon thy high places!
Fallen, fallen are the heroes!
How are the heroes fallen!"

"Ye mountains of Gilboa, on you henceforth,
Let no more rain or dew descend forever.
No more on you, ye mountains blighted with a curse!
For there the shield of heroes was struck down,
The shield of Saul, as of one unconsecrated with oil.

“ Daughters of Israel, weep ye for Saul,
No more will he clothe you in garments of purple.
Nor deck your apparel with ornaments of gold.
Ah! how are the heroes fallen in the midst of the battle,
Jonathan, thou lovely Roe, slain on thy high places.”

But let us take the Psalms as illustrations of David's muse. We need not quote them. They are familiar to all. They are among the first lessons of our infancy. They are treasured up in our hearts as the most precious and sacred mementoes of our early childhood and youth, and they will be the last parts of the Bible, which the aged can ever forget. All the pious dead of every past generation have sung them with rapture : all the virtuous among the living love them : and even the vicious and ungodly cannot fail to admire them.

Have you ever considered what an impression the psalmody of David and his co-minstrels has made upon the world? Have you ever calculated the extent of that impression upon your own heart and character? After all your reading of Shakspeare and Shelley, Moore and Scott, Burns and Byron, or even Milton and Cowper, we venture to say there is no poetry in the world, which can, this day, strike so many chords of feeling, call up so many vivid impressions, and revive so many tender associations in your hearts, as this poetry of the Psalms. Whether you read it in the “ old family Bible that lay on the stand,” or in that dimly printed little Bible which was the gift of a dear friend now gone, the first book you ever owned ; whether you hear it sounding out, in trumpet tones from the pulpit, or coming up softly to the ear of memory, in that calm loving voice, which you first heard at a mother's knee, it has a charm and a power in it which no other bard can claim.

You may read, as you have often read, these wonderful

Psalms of life—the glowing eighteenth or the glorious nineteenth, the beautiful twenty-third or the grandly descriptive twenty-ninth, the proverbial thirty-seventh or the prophetic forty-fifth, the consolatory forty-sixth or the penitential fifty-first, the grateful hundred-and-third or the devout hundred-and-sixteenth, the profound hundred-and-nineteenth or the rapturous hundred-and-thirty-sixth, the plaintive hundred-and-thirty-seventh or the sublime hundred-and-thirty-ninth, but still wherever you read, it is the same divinely inspired and heart-searching voice : and there is no other voice of poesy in the world which can touch your heart so deeply.

IX.—THE ARGUMENT FROM POETRY.

All educated persons, are, to some extent, acquainted with the different arguments, or departments of evidence in favor of the truth and Divine inspiration of the Scriptures : such as the internal and external evidences : the arguments from prophecy, from miracles, from history, from moral purity ; and so on. But has your attention ever been called to the poetic argument? There is an argument, we think ; a very strong and important one, forming a branch of the general internal evidence of the Bible, to be derived from its poetry ; especially this poetry of the Psalms, of which David is the principal writer.

Let those who claim to be philosophers, competent to explain and account for the phenomena of history, tell us, if they can, aside from Divine inspiration, what strange power is this which the sweet Psalmist of Israel has been wielding so long over the heart of man ? What sceptre is this, which he, whose visible

throne has been in the dust so long, is still swaying over that vast multitude of educated, refined minds in every land and nation, that make up the church of God? What magic spell of song is this, with which the monarch minstrel has bound in willing homage, and still binds, with ever increasing admiration, the élite of the whole civilized world, both in the church and out of it? How happens it, that David, more than any other poet of antiquity, in or out of Israel, should write the devotional ballads of all modern Christendom?

Why is it, that we find in these ancient lyrics of the Hebrew muse, a point and power of truth, an insight into human character, a deep sympathy with all man's wants and woes, an experience and a personality, by which they come home to the heart of the individual alike in joy and sorrow as if they were written but yesterday to suit his case: whilst at the same time there is in them a reach and compass, a universality and comprehensiveness, which makes them suit the case of the king or the servant, the philosopher or the child, with equal and perfect fitness: so that they are still adapted to the whole world as well as they were to Jerusalem, and express the devotions of man in the middle of the nineteenth century as suitably as they did in the times of David? Nay, further; why is it that these "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," have expressed all our own moral sentiments, and religious experiences, and longings of desire after God, immeasurably better than we can express them ourselves: so that in every possible condition of prosperity or adversity, joy or sorrow, health or sickness, living and dying, we turn away from all other compositions, and pour out our hearts to God in these words, as the most congenial food and aliment of our souls?

How is it, that this shepherd boy, taken from the folds of

Jesse's flock, on the hills of Judea, has sounded out from that so called rude, unlettered age, and from that insignificant corner of the earth, such notes of human sympathy and Divine consolation, that all civilized men have heard them, and felt them, and can nevermore let them die? Tell us, ye that reject inspiration, but cannot reject the facts of history, why David has done, what no bard of antiquity out of Israel, ever did—what no bard of Assyria, Egypt, Chaldea or Persia, no bard of classic Greece and Rome, ever did? Why have all, or nearly all, the devotional ballads of these great contemporaneous nations perished, whilst the Psalms of Israel remain? Why has the world made such a distinction as to keep these for daily use, and let all others die? Or if any of them do remain, who reads them or sings them or cares for them now? Who adopts them as his matin or his vesper hymn around the altar of domestic devotion, or as his requiem for the dead or his anthem of public praise in the temple of worship? Who now is fired with religious enthusiasm, or raised on the wings of holy rapture, or sunk in the deep waters of penitential sorrow and contrition, by any song of Greece, or lay of ancient Rome? But David is at every fireside, in every temple, in the very hearts' devotions of every civilized man—his voice heard alike in the cradle songs of our infancy and in the last farewells of our departing old age—his words bring still a "rod and a staff," with which the humble and the great walk through the dark "valley and shadow of death." So that David has a firmer hold upon the world now, in the middle of the nineteenth century, than he had twenty centuries ago.

Allow us then to press the question, for there is an argument in it; why have these Jewish ballads become the ballads of all Christendom? why have these lyric odes, which were more pecu-

liarly and intensely national than any songs that any other nation ever had—indeed so intensely, exclusively and thoroughly Jewish, that none but a Jew could have written them, and no mortal could ever mistake one of them for a song of Greece or Rome, Egypt or Babylon—why have these deep-dyed national ballads of Israel become the religious ballads of the world? Why do they alone, of all the songs of antiquity, possess this individuality and comprehensiveness, this combination of the national and local with the universal, this ephemeral aspect and yet indestructible character? Can infidelity answer these questions satisfactorily?

Now, to all these questions there is but one answer possible. These Psalms were written by the inspiration of the Almighty. This poetry contains Divine, eternal truth. There is a genius here greater than that of human poesy. There is an inspiration in these songs higher than that of the muses. There is an intellect at work here, mightier far than David's. This is the secret of their power; this is the life-giving element of their duration. The poetry of these Psalms, like all other poetry of the Bible, has achieved a success in implanting itself in the heart of man, which no other poetry has achieved, just because it has spoken to him always in a voice of infallible truth and virtue as well as of beauty and sublimity. The classic muse of Greece and Rome, spoke to man in a voice of sublimity and beauty, and often gave vent to the outgushing emotions of the soul in a voice of surprising and surpassing eloquence; but she lacked wisdom, she lacked purity, she lacked truth. She had no knowledge of Divine, eternal things; and being weighed in the balances she was found wanting, and her sceptre passed away. But the Hebrew muse, by her knowledge of Divine, eternal truth, not only spoke a language of superior beauty and sublimity, but made an appeal to the understanding,

the heart, the conscience and the taste of the world, which shall never lose its power. And whence did the Hebrew muse derive that knowledge of Divine, eternal things, which gives her song its lasting universal charm? Aye! that is the point which demands the final answer. And there is but one. She received it from heaven; it was the gift of God. She alone, of all the minstrels, was able to sing with unerring wisdom and purity, while she sung in beauty and sublimity, because all her bards "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Here then we find a solution, and the only satisfactory solution of all our questions, as to the superiority and enduring influence of Hebrew poetry—its subject-matter was eternal revealed truth, and its inspiration the breath of God. And therefore, every time you open this sacred book, and feel the power of these venerable psalms, stealing into the very chambers of your soul, you have a witness within—a demonstration strong as a miracle—that this is the Word of God. For assuredly nothing but the miracle of a Divine inspiration, could have given to a shepherd boy of Israel, such power to touch your heart, and to touch the great heart of the world, at this distance of three thousand years.

X.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

But it is time to draw these observations to a close. It seems to us, that every intelligent person must admit, even from the brief survey we have now taken, the existence of true poetry in the Bible; and not only this, but the higher point, which we have been seeking to establish, viz.—that the Bible, containing the most perfect models of sublimity and beauty in several

departments of poetry, is itself the best standard, in literature, of true poetic taste and genius. And it seems to us that no one, possessing a cultivated taste and a true sense of the sublime and beautiful, can ever underrate the bards of the Bible. Nor is it without a purpose that God has made so much use of poetry in his word. A sense of the sublime and beautiful, is deeply implanted in human nature. Of this, poetry is the most fitting exponent and interpreter. And through this medium God has appealed, not only to the hearts of the educated and refined—men of taste and genius—but especially to the young, in whose breasts the fires of enthusiasm always burn most brightly. In this way, in ten thousand instances, he has gained a favorable hearing for that religion which the Bible reveals, and for that great salvation which the Gospel brings, as glad tidings to the sinful. The world has done homage to the blind old bard of Chios, but how different had been the result, had the Iliad contained a true religion and a true gospel for man !

Poetry and music have, in all ages, been regarded as the vehicles of religious instruction, and the handmaids of religious devotion : and they have done good or evil just in proportion as the religion they have helped has been true or false. No well-read student of history can look with indifference upon the influence which poetry has thus exerted over the character and destiny of mankind. In our new Western world and in this money-loving utilitarian age, it is kept somewhat in the background, even as religion itself is, but it can never altogether lose its hold, so long as the church shall sing the praises of God, or the Bible find admirers, or the human heart retain its appreciation of the sublime and beautiful.

There is nothing in the world, except religion, which has

made a deeper impression on man than poetry. And there is nothing in religion itself except its own vital truth, by which it has acquired and maintained its ascendancy over man, more than by its poetry. So that it is impossible to tell how much the world owes to religion, and how much religion owes to poetry. If the Bible then had contained no poetry, its religion would have lost an incalculable source of power : of which all forms of false religion had plentifully availed themselves. Indeed we can hardly conceive how the religion of the Bible, which is preëminently the religion of the heart, could have gained its present supremacy over civilized man, without the aids of poetry and music. We know that all false religions have seized upon them for help : and no great delusion has gained even a partial triumph without their aid.

“There is no form of religion,” says Gilfillan, “so false, but that it has availed itself of the aid of song. Thor and Woden of Northern Europe, Bramah and Vishnu of Asia, have all had their poet laureates. Mohammed is the hero of a thousand parables, poems and tales in the East. Every belief or unbelief has found its poetry, excepting always modern materialism, as represented by the utilitarian philosophy. There is no speculation in its eye—no man of genius can make it beautiful ; because it has not one beautiful element in it, and because no man of genius can believe it. Its sole music is the chink of money, and its main theological principle—the gradual development of mud into man and dirt into deity—is as incapable of poetic treatment, as it is of scientific proof.”

From the survey which we have now taken of the poetry and the bards of the Bible, we have seen how the truth of God and the nature of man, the religion of heaven and the songs of earth, are linked together in immortal ties. What God hath

thus joined together let no man put asunder. Religion and Poesy, united in the Bible from their birth, have lived together through all ages, companions in the church on earth, and as we learn from the visions of the Apocalypse, destined to be companions forever in the church above. For it is one of the last and the most delightful revelations of the book of God, that this religion of heaven, whose harbinger was the song of the morning stars and the sons of God, whose monarch minstrel and whose prophet bards sang so sweetly and so long upon the holy hills of Zion, and whose great Messiah was heralded to earth by a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God in the chorus—"Glory to God in the highest : peace on earth and good will to men"—that this religion, after it shall have been sung in the poetry of every human tongue, and filled the world with the voice of its melody, shall at last, gather together around the throne on high, all its earlier and its later bards for the grand concert of eternity : and that there, upon the bright plains of glory, in an amphitheatre which shall sweep the circuit of the all-surrounding skies, and rear its dome amid the echoing arches of the everlasting firmament—there the innumerable company of the redeemed from earth shall tune their golden lyres, and the thousands and thousands and ten times thousands of angels, cherubim and seraphim, shall bring their harps, and with their immortal tongues, shall sing the "song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," whilst God himself shall hear and approve the praise. Then shall the redeemed from Adam's race lift up their loudest, sweetest song—even the new song of redemption—"Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain" "Unto him that washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God : to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Such then is the Bible ; such its poetry, its religion, its anticipations ! And now in conclusion, as an illustration of the estimation in which the Bible is held by men of genius, and in perfect keeping with our subject, we may refer to an incident, which is one of the most touching and beautiful to be found in modern biography. It is an incident in the last days of Walter Scott.

If there is any one, amongst all the brilliant writers of this nineteenth century, who may be said to have raised himself above his fellows by the force of literary genius, and to have won the very highest position in the world of letters, so as to be fairly entitled to a double chaplet of poesy and prose, it is that gifted son of the North—the author of *Marmion* and of *Waverley*, who held the world so long spell-bound while he was known only as the “ Great Unknown.”

When he, thus crowned with honors at home, and with the laurel-wreath of a world-wide fame, was at last crowned with length of days, and confined to his bed by that sickness from which he never recovered ; and whilst he lay there at Abbotsford in the bosom of his family, calmly awaiting the hour of death, then near at hand, on one occasion of partial relief, he requested a friend to read aloud for him. “ What book shall I read ?” asked the friend. “ Why do you ask such a question ?” said the dying man. “ There is but one : there can be but one now : bring me the Bible.”

Verily, there is a time in every man’s life, when the Bible is the only Book—the last and only book for the peasant and the prince, for the dying child and the dying man of genius.

CHAPTER III.

ELOQUENCE AND ORATORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Elements and Characteristics of Eloquence—Illustrations of Eloquence—Earliest Example of Eloquence in the Old Testament—Judah as an Orator—Aaron as an Orator—Other Examples from the Old Testament—Eloquence of Hushai, the Archite.

FROM the review already taken of the Hebrew poets and poetry, it is easy and natural to pass to a kindred topic, and one too that is sufficiently ample for a separate illustration, viz.:—“The Eloquence and Orators of the Old Testament.” Rich and attractive as we have found this venerable book in the domain of poesy, it will be found not less so, when we come to survey its prose writings, and point out the examples of that soul-subduing eloquence, by which these men of old, spoke to their fellow-men, sometimes as they were impelled by their own genius, sometimes as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and in one case, as “never man spake.”

Our field of vision, though lying in the same book, will be wholly changed. An entirely different class of personages will now stand before us. Although the highest models of eloquence are to be found distributed alike through the Old Testament and the New, still the orators of the Bible are not its poets. And it serves to illustrate most strikingly the vast variety of material in this book, that, of all the men who have

been mentioned in the last chapter, or may be mentioned in this, only one, and truly speaking, not even that one, wears the double character of bard and orator. We propose to consider the orators of the Old Testament and of the New, successively : but as the subject is one of special interest, let us first examine a little into the nature of eloquence in general.

I.—ELEMENTS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ELOQUENCE.

It is not an easy matter to give a satisfactory analysis of eloquence. Dim indeed, and shadowy is the line which divides it from good classic prose on the one side, and from poetry on the other. Yet there is a line. All true poetry, whether of the beautiful or the sublime, is in some sense, eloquent : and all eloquence of a high order, is tinged with a coloring of poetry : because eloquence not less than poetry, is the language of human nature when excited—the language of strong emotions and of a vivid imagination. Still eloquence and poetry are not the same, and must be distinguished.

Regarded simply as an art, the distinction is broad enough, as indicated by the etymology of the terms, poet and orator : the one expressing thought and feeling, by means of words arranged, or, if you please, manufactured into a definite, regular order, called verse or rhythm, and the other expressing thought and feeling by words, studied or unstudied, poured forth from the mouth, without regard to metre or the harmony of numbers. As mere artists, therefore, the poet is a maker of words, mostly written words ; the orator, a speaker of words mostly unwritten ; but both alike conveying thought and feeling to others. The hand, with its proper writing materials, might be regarded as the visible emblem of the one :

and the mouth, with its appropriate aids of tone, look and gesture, as the symbol of the other.

But mere art is the least important element, either of poetry or eloquence. All verse, however regular its numbers, is not poetry : nor is all oratory, however sonorous and ornate, eloquent. There must be something else : there must be a living spirit in the words—a sort of divinity stirring within the numbers or the speech, before we can say, that this is poetry, or that is eloquence. We may have the shibboleth of poetic diction, and the glow of poetic images, as well as the harmony of sweet sounds, where there is no true spirit of poesy. So also there may be the spirit of real poetry, where there is no form of verse : as in Ossian, or in our translation of the Bible, or in the original Hebrew itself, and as there would be in Milton or any other great poet, whose verse might be turned into prose, without, at all, ceasing to breathe the true spirit of poetry.

And precisely so is it with the orator. A man may open his mouth and speak all day : and in all his words there may be no eloquence, either of thought, feeling, or imagination—not one glowing image, not one thrilling thought, not one soul-stirring appeal. And yet another man, with a certain earnestness and enthusiasm, shall arise and present the same arguments, though in different words ; or, if you please, the very same words, though in a different manner, and in him all will be eloquent—there will be eloquence in every accent, look and gesture : and he will so electrify the audience, that they shall not know these words and arguments are the same.

What constitutes the difference ? As all men are not orators, nor all oratory eloquence, by what process, and at what point, does simple speech lay aside its dullness and undergo that wonderful transformation which entitles it to be called eloquent ? It is hard to tell. There is perhaps nothing more

difficult to bring within the compass of a complete definition than the nature of true eloquence. We shall not attempt it. There are some things which must be felt in order to be appreciated. We should hardly attempt to define for others, the form and features, the look and lineaments of an angel, even if we had seen one. So, to those who have not witnessed for themselves the exhibitions of real eloquence all descriptions would be useless. But no man needs a logical definition to ascertain what eloquence is, or to know when he hears a true orator. For it is of the very nature of this inspiration to carry its own credentials along with it, and by the living voice to cleave a way for itself directly to the heart. Let it suffice then, to point out and to illustrate by examples, the different species of eloquence, leaving the nature of the thing itself to the taste, judgment, and opportunities of each individual.

The object of the orator, whether at the bar, or on the forum, in the pulpit or the lecture-room, in all judicial, deliberative, religious and popular assemblies, is to convince, instruct, please, persuade, or excite his audience, as the case may be ; sometimes the one and sometimes the other, and it may be all. Now, the power by which he does this, most effectively, is what we call eloquence. But that power partakes of different elements in different cases, and manifests itself in several different ways in different orators. And these diversities give rise to different orders or species of eloquence. It seems to us, from such examination as we have been able to make, that these several elements and characteristics of eloquence, may all be reduced to the four following—each distinct enough to give rise to a peculiar species, and all, at the same time, comprehensive enough to cover every style and order of true eloquence :

The first is the element of superior knowledge and intellectual

power in the orator—the eloquence of pure reason and argument. Its chief characteristic is strong, clear, original thought, forcibly expressed. We may denominate it the eloquence of the Intellect, as distinguished from each of the other orders.

The second is that element of power in the orator which springs from a refined taste, a vivid imagination, and great command of language. It deals much in analogies and illustrations. It has a high appreciation of the sublime and beautiful. It is characterized by classic diction and brilliant imagery. It may be called the eloquence of Taste and Imagination.

The third element is that of earnestness, enthusiasm and deep emotion in the speaker. All its utterances come fresh from the fountains of feeling in the soul. All its words are oracles and commands. The orator appears like one inspired—one born to command by the very energy of his will and intensity of his convictions. This may be called the eloquence of Sympathy and the Passions.

The fourth is the element of graceful delivery, including everything that pertains to the person, manner, tone, look and gesture of the speaker. It is that power which can supply the place of the other three; and often, as on the stage, makes things that are not, appear as though they were. This may be called the eloquence of Action and the Voice: of which Garrick may be taken as the highest type.

II.—ILLUSTRATIONS OF ELOQUENCE.

Now it is manifest that all the greatest orators of ancient and modern times have possessed these four elements of power, and exhibited these several varieties of eloquence. And their suc-

cess has been in proportion to the perfection of this combination of gifts and endowments. Clearly these qualities all met in Demosthenes and in Cicero. They all met in Chatham, Fox and Sheridan, though in very different degrees. They were all combined, though unequally, in Chalmers, Edward Irving, and Robert Hall. The most perfect model of eloquence which our own country has ever produced—Patrick Henry—was distinguished for a happy combination of all these characteristics. But from all the accounts which have come down to us from his contemporaries, it is evident that he was far more indebted to the last two of these characteristics than to the first two. Dr. Alexander, who heard him, at the bar, in a case of life and death, has given us the following testimony: “The power of Henry’s eloquence was due, first, to the greatness of his emotion and passion, accompanied with a versatility which enabled him to assume at once any emotion or passion which was suited to his ends. Not less indispensable, secondly, was a matchless perfection of the organs of expression, including the entire apparatus of voice, intonation, pause, gesture, attitude and indescribable play of countenance. In no instance did he ever indulge in an expression that was not instantly recognized as nature itself: yet some of his penetrating and subduing tones were absolutely peculiar, and as inimitable as they were indescribable. These were felt by every hearer in all their force. His mightiest feelings were sometimes indicated and communicated by a long pause, aided by an eloquent aspect, and some significant use of his finger.”

Macaulay, who now holds a place amongst the ablest of living orators, is evidently the opposite of Henry, in being mostly distinguished for the eloquence of taste and imagination, and also of the intellect. Again, Whitfield, a perfect master of the elo-

quence of sympathy and the passions, of action and delivery not wanting also in taste and imagination, was unquestionably the greatest of pulpit orators while living, but is scarcely known to posterity by his writings, because he was deficient in the eloquence of the intellect.

On the contrary, Edmund Burke, excelled all his contemporaries by his massive intellect, his varied learning, his classic taste and exuberant imagination, and being dead, yet speaketh in his writings ; whilst as a living orator, because lacking a single characteristic—the eloquence of delivery and the voice—he was not only eclipsed by inferior men, but left to pronounce his great speeches to empty benches. Still who can deny that Burke was an eloquent man ? We might as well deny that there is any such thing as eloquence in the world. It is obvious, then, that there are different orders of eloquence. It is obvious further, that whilst all these characteristics must meet to form a perfect and successful orator, yet they have been exhibited in very different proportions by those entitled to be called eloquent. Sometimes one, and sometimes another has been the prominent characteristic.

We have seen a striking illustration of this difference of gifts, in that remarkable triumvirate, whose eloquence adorned our national senate for a quarter of a century, whose statesmanship filled the world with its fame, and whose loss, so recently and so nearly together, our country has been called to deplore. Webster, Clay and Calhoun are beyond all comparison the three greatest statesmen our country has produced in this nineteenth century, and they take their rightful place also amongst the greatest forensic orators and parliamentary debaters of the world. And so nearly balanced were their abilities that it is almost impossible to decide the point of superiority, and say,

who made the deepest impression on the men of his generation. There can be no question, as to one point—whose influence will be greatest on posterity, because that is determined by their writings. Now each of these eminent men possessed, in some degree, all the essential elements of eloquence. And yet how widely different—how utterly dissimilar were their styles of oratory—how peculiar to each, how inimitable by any other, and how characteristic of the man, was his own mode of speech! They did not differ from their fellow-men, more widely, than they differed from each other. Perhaps of no three men in America, could it be more truly said, than of each of these, that as a man and an orator, he was *sui generis*—forming an order by himself.

Mr. Calhoun's eloquence was the eloquence of intellect and argument—pure, clear, original thought flowing from one of the acutest of intellects, combined, at the same time, with an energy of will, a depth and earnestness of emotion, a high wrought enthusiasm, and a conviction within, that always seemed bent on carrying its purpose in defiance of all opposition. He was but little aided by the imagination, and almost unindebted to the outward graces of delivery, saving such as necessarily arose from a commanding person, an eye ever burning with the fires of genius, and a voice indicative of the utmost decision and energy. But it was a combination of the first two characteristics—intellectual power and enthusiastic passion—possessed in a preëminent degree, that gave him his influence as an orator and his greatness as a statesman. We may take him as the representative and the type of the eloquence of Intellect and Enthusiasm.

Mr. Webster's was also the eloquence of intellect and argument, as massive and comprehensive as that of his great

compeer, but at the same time aided by a taste as classical as Cicero's and an imagination almost as exuberant as Burke's—an eloquence too, uttered with all the force that an imposing person, a powerful voice, and an energetic delivery could give; but withal so stately, so magnificent, so coldly brilliant, that it did not always touch the heart and move the passions, except on extraordinary occasions, when the circumstances themselves aided the speaker's appeal. He possessed three of the elements of a great orator in high perfection, and the fourth to some extent. His great power lay in his extraordinary combination of argument, taste and imagination. His eloquence is eloquence to be read as well as heard. His intellect was like the clear sky of a winter's night, when all the stars of the firmament are out—and we fancy that every star is a gem of thought—a diamond of the mind. We take him as the exponent of the eloquence of Reason and Imagination.

Mr. Clay's eloquence was preëminently that of the feelings and the passions. Feeling deeply himself, he was a perfect master of all those natural arts of delivery which enabled him, at will, to move and to control the sympathies of his hearers. With an intensity of earnestness, which gave him the aspect of one born to command, and with an enthusiasm which filled and fired his whole soul, he needed not the slow processes of argument, nor the aids of imagination and classic diction to effect his object, but taking the most direct and effective way of reaching the heart—that is, the short cut through the door of its sympathies and passions—he carried the citadel, first by stratagem and then by storm. He was not wanting in powers of reasoning, nor in flights of imagination, but he did not depend on these. He had more effective artillery. His great power as an orator lay, not in the eloquence of intellect and argument, nor in that of taste and

imagination, but in the burning eloquence of a soul on fire, giving utterance to itself with those matchless graces of delivery, that charm of a personal presence, that magic of a look, that pointing of a finger, that clarion-like ringing or thunder-tone of the voice, which it is impossible, for any one who heard him, to believe could have been surpassed by Demosthenes. In this last characteristic, he was unlike both his great compeers, and much more resembled Patrick Henry. We take him, then, as the representative of the eloquence of action and delivery, combined with enthusiasm and the passions.

III.—EARLIEST EXAMPLES OF ELOQUENCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

After this somewhat protracted, though we trust, not uninteresting nor unprofitable illustration of the several orders of eloquence, let us now address ourselves to the main subject before us—to a consideration of those examples which so abundantly adorn the annals of scripture history. For let no one suppose that eloquence and oratory are things unknown to the Bible; both the Old Testament and the New, make mention of the professional orator, and give us specimens of almost every kind of eloquence. The prophet Isaiah, in his third chapter, gives the following enumeration of prominent public characters and heads of the people—"The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent and the ancient; the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator." Here the eloquent orator is the climax of the catalogue, which seems to show in what estimation the art of eloquence was held amongst his countrymen at that early day, long before the

Acropolis of Athens had rung with the notes of Grecian eloquence.

The first example of a full and regular oration, which we find on record in the Bible, is in the forty-fourth chapter of Genesis. It is the speech of Judah, before Joseph in Egypt, in behalf of his brother Benjamin, and if this had been the first speech that was ever delivered, it would be a proof, that the eloquence of the bar had preceded all other eloquence. For it has all the characteristics of an argument in defence—a plea and vindication before a judicial tribunal; but whilst it is the first recorded speech, delivered in the presence of a numerous audience, which has come down to us, it was by no means the first instance of public speaking. The Bible mentions several earlier occasions of public speaking, and even records what was said, in a few instances of a less formal and public character. For example we have the long and very effective speech of Abraham's servant, probably Eliezer of Damascus, delivered to the kinsmen of Rebekah, in which he recites the events of his journey, tells of the wealth and honor of Abraham, and seeks to win the prize of a beautiful young bride for his master's son. Eloquence has not always been so successful as it was on this occasion, when it found its way to the heart of the damsel and of all her kindred. And those who would achieve a like success for themselves on such occasions, might do well to study, not only the natural, heartfelt eloquence, but the ardent piety and faith in Providence, which marked this first recorded speech and offer for a bride.

An earlier instance still, but of a different kind, we find in the short speeches of that dialogue between Abraham and Ephor, about the purchase of Machpelah, which, we are told, "was held in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all

the city ;” and in which, as you may observe, both speakers exhibited much of the dignity, grace and deference of the finished orator. Similar to this too, was another dialogue, held long afterwards, at the meeting and reconciliation of the twin brothers, Esau and Jacob, in the presence of their respective bands, who must have constituted no inconsiderable nor uninterested auditory. And in this connection we find an example—the first recorded example, of still another kind of eloquence—the eloquence of prayer. For you must bear in mind that prayer is one of the forms of oratory, perhaps the original and primitive form, being an address, not to men, but to God. This is implied in the very word oratory. That solemn and impressive dialogue between Jehovah and Abraham respecting the overthrow of the cities of the plain, can hardly be called a prayer, although in the end it partook somewhat of the nature of prayer. It was a most beautiful and eloquent dialogue and remonstrance, but strictly speaking not a prayer. Accordingly, if we except a few brief expressions of prayer in the life of Abraham, and also the prayer of Eliezer on his mission for Rebekah, the first recorded prayer of any length which we find in the Bible is that of Jacob, prior to his meeting with Esau. On this Dr. Kitto well remarks : “ Since the most ancient remaining example of any human act and thought, is deemed worthy of peculiar notice and consideration, the first human prayer that has reached us is entitled to attention.” This prayer is a model of earnest, humble, confiding importunity ; it is in these words : “ O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou has showed unto thy servant ; for with my

staff I passed over this Jordan, and now am become two bands
Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, from the
hand of Esau ; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me,
and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will
surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea,
which cannot be numbered for multitude."

Here then, as early as the times of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have recorded specimens of three kinds of eloquent, persuasive speech—the oral narrative, the dialogue, and the prayer. But long before Abraham's day, we find still another form of oratory mentioned. We read of Noah, who is described in the New Testament, as a "preacher of righteousness," and who warned the antediluvian world of an approaching deluge, while the ark was preparing, during probably a hundred and twenty years. Though not one word of his preaching has come down to us, we may consider him as the earliest example, at least on record, of the eloquence of the pulpit. We can easily believe that with such a theme upon his lips as the wrath of God about to be poured out upon a guilty world in the waters of a universal deluge, his preaching must have been eloquent and powerful. Nor can we tell how many, who died during this respite of 120 years, may have repented and believed, and thus been saved by his preaching ; but we know that all the living perished except those of his own household. They continued says our Saviour, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, till the flood came and took them all away." Like many of his successors, this first of preachers may have been constrained at last to say—"Lord, who hath believed our report."

If we ascend the stream of sacred history still higher, we shall come, at last, to the record of another speaker, and ano-

ther speech—a speech delivered to the first audience that existed on earth, conceived and uttered too with great art, and with the full purpose of persuasion—a speech, alas ! as effective as it was fair, as fatal as it was false. It is the brief, but cunning address of that arch-tempter, who, “skilled to make the worse appear the better reason,” presented such a show of reason and argument, as one entitled to expound the law of God. “Ye shall not surely die : for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.” It would seem, that the spirit of inspiration had recorded for us this first plausible and fatal speech, as if to be prophetic alike of the vast influence and the vast abuse, amongst men, of the noble art of persuasion, and as if to warn us, by one memorable example against the wiles of the deceitful special pleader, and sophist, and rhetorician. For here, in this first speech of that old serpent, the Devil, we have the original type and model of all those orators, great and small, who knowing the right have defended the wrong, and prostituted their high talents to plead the cause of falsehood and injustice. How often, in the course of ages, and how often, alas ! in our own times, have truth and justice fallen in the streets, judgment been turned away backward, the cause of suffering innocence been trampled in the dust, and pampered vice and crime gone unwhipt of justice, through the perversion of the high and sacred gifts of eloquence !

Now, we have a heart-felt reverence and homage for the nobility of the law, a profound respect and admiration for the legal profession, as its ministers and expounders—we regard the one as the very sanctuary of all social and civil order, and look up to the other, as the high priests of truth and justice, clothed with the delegated authority of God ; but when we see,

as we have too often seen, the sworn expounders of the law, vindicating the most awful crimes known to the Decalogue, when we see those to whom we are accustomed to look as the natural and divinely appointed guardians of life, character and public order, combining, under the mere forms of law, to defeat all the ends for which law was ordained of God, we have no language adequate to express our feelings of grief and alarm. Our confidence in the tribunals of justice is shaken : our feeling of protection in the enjoyment of life, liberty and happiness, is rudely torn away : and the native sense of justice, which underlies the public conscience, receives a wound, at the hands of its professed friends, from which it recoils in amazement and terror.

And if there is any responsibility, which it will be fearful to meet in the day of final accounts at the bar of the judge of quick and dead, it must be the responsibility of the ministers of justice who have perverted the heaven-born gifts of genius and eloquence, thus to trample her sacred name in the dust. If there is any woe in the Bible which is fearful and overwhelming, it is the woe pronounced on those, who plead the cause of injustice and oppression, "calling evil good and good evil, putting darkness for light and light for darkness," confounding and breaking down all the landmarks between right and wrong. Eloquent oratory is a splendid gift, but let the eloquent orator beware how he abuses that gift. For there is a God of infinite holiness on the throne who will hold him to a strict account for every word ; and that God hath said—"Woe unto them that justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him."

IV.—JUDAH AS AN ORATOR.

But returning from this digression, and passing over all the earlier and less finished examples of public speaking in the Bible, we may select the plea of Judah, as an instance of the most simple, touching and beautiful forensic eloquence. We need not stop to depict the scene. You all remember the trying circumstances in which he stood up to plead for his brethren and himself in that august presence—before the powerful, apparently harsh, and, to them all, unknown governor of Egypt. A stranger far from home, and powerless; in a land of despotic power and dark idolatry, he stood arraigned before the judgment seat on a charge which could not be denied. Before him and around him were doubtless gathered the stern officers of justice and a crowd of unsympathizing spectators; whilst in the back-ground stood his brethren with desponding hearts and looks of agony. He stood moreover with the consciousness of a dark deed of former guilt yet unatoned—a dreadful secret which his companions knew, but which none durst reveal—and at the same time conscious of perfect innocence in the matter of which they were now accused—under all these struggling emotions, amidst all these crushing disadvantages, he stands there to plead for liberty, it may be for life.

We know not with what looks and accents he delivered the speech. We can only imagine what must have been the looks, and tones and gestures of a man speaking under such circumstances. Indeed the speech itself, which is on record, embraced in the short compass of seventeen verses, may be taken as an index of what these were. Aside from these, the speech contains all the elements of real eloquence. Its chief characteristic

is its touching pathos—its appeal to the tenderest sympathies of the soul. The deepest fountains of feeling are broken up, and poured out in every word. Its earnestness, is an earnestness almost unto death. It contains also argument—the argument of the most simple, straight-forward, truthful narrative of facts. It appeals also to the imagination : and it is beautiful to mark, with what delicacy the speaker's fancy plays around the venerable form of that sorrowing patriarch who, in his distant home, is waiting for Benjamin, whose very life is bound up in the life of the child, and whose grey hairs must go down to the grave if he does not return.

But let us read the passage, as there is perhaps nothing in the Bible more worthy of a frequent perusal, as a model of good taste and simple natural oratory. The whole company, on the finding of the cup, had returned to the city. Brought into Joseph's house, they fell down on the ground before him. And Joseph said unto them, "What deed is this, that ye have done? Know ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

And Judah said, "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants; behold we are my Lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup was found."

And he said, "God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get ye up in peace unto your father."

Then Judah came near unto him and said, "Oh, my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, have ye a father or a brother? And we said unto my lord, 'We have a

father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one ; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.' And thou saidst unto thy servant, 'Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.' And we said unto my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant, my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go again and buy us a little food.' And we said, 'We cannot go down ; if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down ; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.' Then thy servant, my father, said unto us, 'Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. And the one went out from me ; and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces, and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.' Now therefore, when I come to thy servant, my father, and the lad be not with us ; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life : it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die ; and thy servants shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, 'If I bring him not unto thee, then, I shall bear the blame of my father forever.' Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord : and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me ? lest peradventure, I see the evil that shall come on my father."

Now if eloquence is to be measured by the effect it produces, and that be adjudged great which accomplishes its purpose, then was this an eloquent and powerful speech. It gained its end completely. It changed the whole plan of Joseph, which had been to keep Benjamin in Egypt. It melted his soul to tenderness. He could restrain his feelings no longer ; he made himself known to his brethren and wept aloud in the hearing of all the house of Pharaoh. If Judah had known at the first, who this exalted personage was before whom he was pleading, and if he had been able to read his inmost heart during the delivery of his speech, he could hardly have put words together making a stronger appeal to the feelings and imagination of Joseph. Says that eminent biblical critic, Dr. Kitto, "There is not in the whole range of literature a finer piece of natural eloquence ; and there are few who have read it, without being moved, like Joseph, even to tears." We certainly do not know a piece of the same compass, in any uninspired composition, which can so affect us.

V.—AARON AS AN ORATOR.

The next upon our list of Bible orators is Aaron, the brother of Moses. It would seem that Moses, with all his extraordinary gifts and powers, was no orator, at least, in his own estimation. Although his educational advantages in Egypt had been great, and perhaps his public services also, and although he is described as a "man mighty in words and deeds," yet, up to the time of his commission to deliver Israel, he seems not to have been distinguished for the gift of public speaking. He may have become so afterwards ; but on this ground, at the time of the

commission, he pleaded exemption from the arduous work. Aaron, his elder brother, however, who had remained in Egypt during the forty years' absence of Moses, and had no doubt acquired some considerable influence amongst his countrymen, did possess this very qualification which the other lacked ; and that in a high degree, for He who formed man's mouth testified that he could "speak well." In that extraordinary interview, which took place at the burning bush on mount Horeb, between Moses and the Almighty, among other excuses for not accepting the great commission, we hear him offering the following : —" Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant : but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." In this perhaps he had spoken too disparagingly of his natural gifts, as well as of the Lord's power : and with much displeasure the Lord said, " Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother ; I know him that he can speak well ; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth ; and thou shalt be to him instead of God."

Thus commissioned and empowered, to act as one man—an arrangement which combined the energy of the man of deeds with the eloquence of the man of words—the two brothers went forth to fulfill their high and solemn task. Having first met in the wilderness by divine direction, they returned together into Egypt, with the wonder-working rod in their hands, and a "Thus saith the Lord" upon their lips, to deliver the messages of Jehovah, first to their own people and then to Pharaoh. Arrived at the scene of action, and received as deliverers by their suffering countrymen, they hear again a voice from heaven, reaffirming their joint commission, and saying to Moses : —" See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh ; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet ; thou shalt speak all that I com-

mand thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land."

But we need not repeat the story of their wonderful labors. You remember what followed—how they stood day after day to plead their cause before the monarch and the magicians and all the Court of Egypt—how they waxed bolder and bolder, as they delivered their sublime and awful messages in the name of the God of Israel. If ever there was a voice of eloquence heard amongst men which made the wicked tremble, even on the throne of power, it must have been the voice of these stern, uncompromising ambassadors from the desert, as they stood some sixteen times in the presence of the tyrant, pleading the cause of their oppressed brethren, and alternately denouncing and averting the wrath of heaven. If ever words were deeds, they were these words, which, lightning-like, were so speedily followed by the thunder-bolts of Divine judgment.

Now there are three things which are always needful for the display of eloquence of the highest order ; three essential particulars must conspire together in the production of a grand and powerful speech ; and if these conspire, the speech need not be long in order to be eloquent and effective. There must be a great occasion, a great subject, and a great speaker. No one of these will do alone ; no two of them will answer without the third. Says a high authority, Mr. Webster, "true eloquence does not consist in mere speech. It must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion." Such a subject Demosthenes had in the liberty of Greece, and such an occasion in the threatened invasion of Philip, king of Macedon ; besides many others. Such an occasion and such a subject Cicero found in defending the rights of Roman citizenship against Verres, and the safety of the republic against the machinations

of Catiline. Such an occasion and such a theme of absorbing public interest, Burke and Sheridan had on the trial of Warren Hastings ; Chatham on the American War ; Brougham at the trial of Queen Caroline ; and Robert Emmet when asked, "Why sentence of death should not be pronounced against him." Such Whitfield always had in preaching salvation to the vast crowds that attended his ministry, both in England and America. Such a theme and such a crisis too of intense moral sublimity, Patrick Henry and his compatriots found in our Revolutionary struggle. Such had Mr. Clay more than once, in introducing his great compromise measures for the pacification of our country. And such had Mr. Webster whenever he stood forth as the expounder of our Constitution, and defender of our national union.

In all these cases, and in many others that might be mentioned, the three circumstances of a great occasion, a great theme, and a great man conspired together to the creation of great eloquence. Now apply the canon to the case in hand ; and tell us when did these three essentials ever meet in such sublime combination, as when the two brothers stood before Pharaoh, as Divinely authorized deliverers of Israel, demanding a hearing in the name of Jehovah, and with outstretched hand and uplifted rod, reiterating the message, till Egypt's river rolled with blood—till its soil crept with reptiles and its air swarmed with insects—till all its vegetable and its animal tribes died of pestilence or devouring vermin—till its sky alternately grew black with hail storms or blazed with lurid lightnings, and a cry of death was heard at midnight in every habitation of the land ! The subject was the emancipation, from a horrible bondage, of a nation, probably not much short of three millions of people. The occasion was the manifest in-

terposition of Jehovah in the ten successive and miraculous judgments which spread desolation over the most powerful kingdom then in the world. The speaker was not simply the fluent, eloquent Aaron, supported by his more powerful brother, but the Lord himself, who was revealing his mighty arm and uttering that voice which shakes both earth and heaven. They spoke to Pharaoh, the very words which the Almighty had spoken to them.

VI.—OTHER EXAMPLES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

But not wishing to dwell too long on the Old Testament, we must now group together, by way of reference or of mere passing notice, several other striking examples of eloquent public speaking, along with one, not less remarkable, of a private character. These, could we dwell upon them, would not be found wanting in any essential attribute of moral sublimity and power. Such, for instance, was the noble and dignified speech, recorded at some length, which Joseph delivered in the presence of the wise men of Egypt, when he interpreted the dreams of the king, and foretold the years of plenty and of famine.—Such were the still fuller and loftier speeches of Daniel, long afterwards, on similar occasions; once when he stood before Belshazzar and a thousand of his lords and chief estates, to expound the mysterious hand writing on the wall, and tell of the judgment which was even then waiting at the door; and twice before that, when he stood before Nebuchadnezzar, and so announced the decrees of heaven, that this proudest of Chaldaea's monarchs fell down and worshipped Daniel, commanding an oblation to be offered to him as one having the spirit of the

holy God. We might mention, as further examples, those awfully sublime, messages some of them recorded, and some barely referred to, which on great and trying occasions, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah, each in his day, delivered to the kings and courts of Israel and Judah.

We might dwell upon another scene of interest (now greatly increased by the light of Mr. Layard's discoveries of Nineveh), and tell of that extraordinary display of power by a single voice speaking in the name of the Lord, which took place when Jonah passed through the great city, and for one whole day proclaimed in all its streets, in the hearing of its vast population, those words of terror: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown,"—until king and people repented before God in sackcloth and ashes. To use the language of another: "He must have been the subject of strange and conflicting emotions when he entered the gates of that proud capital. The stern soldiers upon the battlements, armed with swords and shields, helmets and spears—the colossal images of winged compound animals that guarded the gates—the gorgeous chariots and horsemen that rattled and bounded through the streets—the pomp and state of the royal palaces—the signs of trade and commerce, wealth and luxury, of pleasure and wickedness on every hand—must have amazed and perplexed the prophet, conscious of his utter loneliness amidst a mighty population, of his despicable poverty amidst surrounding riches, of his rough and foreign aspect amidst a proud and polished community—there was enough to shake his faith, and to cowardize his bold, haughty, and scornful spirit. Yet he dared not a second time abandon his mission. He therefore passed along the broad ways, and the great places of concourse, crying in solemn tones, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'" No

doubt this great burden of his speech was enforced by other words, and perhaps by a recital of all that had happened to him in the deep.

We might speak also of the eloquence of another very different occasion ; of that exciting and joyful day, when the Jewish exiles, on their return from Babylon, gazed with gratitude upon the rising walls of their new city and temple, and heard Ezra, the patriot scribe and priest, from his wooden pulpit in the street, and from morning till midnight, reading and expounding the word of God to the assembled multitude. We have no record of what he said. But we know there must have been great eloquence there, because it was a great day for Jerusalem, the speaker had a great theme, and he was himself a distinguished servant of God.

We might set before you, in like manner, the scenes of an earlier and similar but still more imposing occasion ; when at the dedication of the first temple, Solomon, the most august of Hebrew monarchs, stood before the altar of the Lord, while the cloud of the Divine glory filled the house. Having first addressed the myriads of devout worshippers there assembled, he kneeled down upon the scaffold of brass in the centre of the court, and spreading forth his hands towards heaven, poured out an address to Jehovah, which is recorded for our instruction, and is at once the longest prayer in the Bible, and the most magnificent liturgy in human speech.

To this brief enumeration of cases, we must now add yet another of wholly different character. It is an illustration of eloquence in private between a man and his friend—the subject and his sovereign, if we do not misjudge the narrative ; but still a case, where the theme, the occasion and the person, were all important enough to produce a great impression. It is con-

tained in that remarkable passage, where Nathan the prophet appeared before David with a message from the Lord respecting those fearful crimes of murder and adultery which had just been perpetrated in secret. With the utmost skill and delicacy the prophet introduces his subject by a parable of the most touching pathos and beauty, setting forth a case of glaring injustice and oppression. This parable, which excels all description, we must recite. It was in these words—“And he said unto the king, There were two men in one city ; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb which he had bought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him ; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man : and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.” The speaker thus gains from the unconscious monarch an impartial verdict of self-condemnation in the guise of a sentence of death against the supposed offender : and then, as we may well imagine, suddenly changing his whole look, and tone and gesture, he utters that fearful indictment of high crimes and misdemeanors, of which every sentence seems to ring with the words—“Thou art the man,” and which at once brought from the king the bitter confession—“I have sinned against the Lord.”

If ever words were barbed arrows, piercing to the heart of conscious guilt, they were the words of this memorable speech. If ever eloquence mustered all its forces for a single charge, and poured them out in one intense and burning sentence, it was in this expression—"Thou art the man." We might suppose such a speech to have been taken as the model of Junius and all kindred writers. It has in fact been admired and imitated by all the great orators of all ages who have been familiar with the Bible. In fact, it may be observed, that almost all great speakers and writers, have either intentionally or unintentionally, paid the Bible the compliment of borrowing its language for their passages of greatest power. When they would give to truth its most cutting power—when they would put barbs upon the arrows of invective—when they would bring an argument or appeal to its keenest edge—when they would wind up a magnificent sentence or paragraph by a still more magnificent close—when they would sum up all in one expression which everybody should understand and feel and remember forever—they seem to have felt that the work was best accomplished by some apt allusion, or illustration, or quotation, taken from the word of God. How many offenders, great and small, have had the truth brought home to their consciences, in these very words of Nathan to David—"Thou art the man!" But often as they have been quoted—often as they have been imitated, no orator of ancient or modern times has ever found an expression of greater point and power. Perhaps the nearest parallel to this speech might be found in that bold interview between John Knox and the Queen of Scots, in which, to a question of the queen, the reformer replied—"If princes, madam, exceed their bounds, no doubt they may be resisted by power." It was to the study of such scriptural models as this, that Knox owed

his heroic fidelity as a preacher. And doubtless to the same source, an orator of very different character, John Randolph of Roanoke, was indebted for much of that bold defiant eloquence, with which at times, with shrill, unearthly voice, piercing eye and pointing finger, he stood like a spectre from the grave, and poured out vials of wrath against vice and corruption in the high places of political power.

VII.—HUSHAI THE ARCHITE.

Passing over all these and many other examples of effective thrilling oratory that might be mentioned, let us pause to notice one more remarkable case before we leave the Old Testament. It is the speech of Hushai the Archite, the friend and counselor of David. It was delivered in the audience of the elders and chief men of Israel, who had been hastily summoned by Absalom to deliberate on the state of public affairs at the time of his usurpation—perhaps the first cabinet council of which we have any record in the history of the world. Whether we consider the crisis which called forth this speech, or the important results which flowed from it, we must regard it as one of the most remarkable instances of political sagacity and oratorical skill to be found in the Bible. We know of no speech more worthy of a profound and careful study by the admirers of eloquence. Upon it the cause and kingdom, the life and earthly destiny of David, turned as upon a pivot.

The rebellion of Absalom had succeeded beyond all expectation. David, with a small band of faithful friends and of veteran warriors, had hastily retired from the city on the approach of his ungrateful son. The throne, the palace, all

Jerusalem, had fallen, without a blow, into the hands of that son. Even Ahithophel, the infallible counsellor, had gone over and espoused the cause of the usurper. Elated with his unexpected success, Absalom calls a council of his nobles and mighty men, to determine what was best to be done in reference to David and his few followers, now on their retreat towards the Jordan.

Ahithophel gives his opinion at once, and with his usual energetic decision. He counsels action—immediate and hot pursuit of the king. He urges, that with twelve thousand chosen men, himself at their head, they should pursue David that very night and overtaking him while weary and weak-handed, should kill him, put all his followers to flight, and thus by a single stroke render all further opposition impossible. With this counsel, we are told, Absalom and all the elders of Israel were well pleased. For they saw at a glance, that if adopted, it must be as successful as it was decisive.

But there was another honorable counsellor at hand, whose opinion was worth being heard on this important occasion. And probably with a view to confirm what had already been said and agreed upon, as well as out of deference to so distinguished an adherent, Absalom calls him in to hear what he will say. This was Hushai the Archite, well known hitherto as a fast friend of David, but who, that very evening, at the request of the king, had left him, returned to Jerusalem, held an interview with Absalom, and given in his adhesion to the usurper. He it is, that now appears in the council, at the very juncture when Ahithophel's counsel is on the point of being carried, and by invitation rises to give his opinion. We can easily imagine how he felt, and almost how he looked under the keen searching glances of the selfish, ambitious, black-hearted men, who

were already thirsting for the blood of their old king, and now reluctantly paused to give an impatient hearing to this new comer.

—“He rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state ; deep on his front engraven,
Deliberation sat and public care ;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone.”

Never did an orator stand up under more embarrassing circumstances. Never did an orator undertake a more difficult or dangerous task. At heart the fast friend of David, though professing allegiance to Absalom, he stands there in the midst of violent, unprincipled men, and by one wrong word, he may not only sink the cause of his master but forfeit his own life. But he sees that a crisis has come ; he must speak now, or never, for David. He sees with the clear intuition of an experienced statesman, that if Ahithophel's counsel is followed, all is lost ; David's kingdom and his life will have perished together before to-morrow's sun. His grand object then is to gain time—time enough for David to make his escape beyond the Jordan. To do this he must, by some kind of argument or appeal, defeat the counsel of Ahithophel—that counsel which no man had ever defeated before—that counsel which, being followed, had never been known to fail—that counsel of which the Bible says—“it was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.”

And most skillfully did he accomplish the task. His speech shows a consummate knowledge of human nature—a perfect insight into the secret motives and springs of action of the men whom he addresses. He seems to have discerned at a glance, if he did not know already, the precise mental and moral calibre of the men with whom he now has to deal. If

we had no other information touching the character of Absalom, this speech would furnish the key by which to read him through and through. He does not attack a single principle advanced by Ahithophel, nor object to a single position except one—the bare question of expediency. That he knew was the only principle which weighed a feather in the minds of his auditors. He makes no appeal to any feeling of filial love, or of natural compassion, in order to win for David a milder fate, or a single day of grace : because he knew that every heart in that assembly was utterly dead to any such appeal. Self-love and indulgence, vanity and ambition, were the governing instincts of Absalom and his band. So Hushai sees that he must gain his point by gaining these. Accordingly he makes such an appeal to their hopes and fears—he so depicts the perils of a night attack, so paints the well remembered prowess of David and his men of war, making them feel that they might fall into a very den of lions by the way, and so sets before them the glory of a general battle with all Israel in the field, and Absalom as commander-in-chief—that they begin to wonder at the rashness of Ahithophel's policy of a pursuit at night, and to think that there will be not only safety, but even glory in delay. His speech is an argument grounding itself upon facts—well known, incontestable facts—but appealing to the imagination and to all the passions that swayed the souls of his hearers.

The speech itself is on record, all embraced in seven verses in the second book of Samuel. It is so brief, so ingenious, so effective, so masterly every way, and withal so seldom read, that we must now quote it entire, hoping that you will take an early opportunity to examine it in the Bible at your leisure. We shall give it just as it stands in our Bibles, only interposing a

word or two here and there, to complete or elucidate the meaning, which words will be readily distinguished.

“ And Hushai said, the counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time. For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are (even now) chafed in their minds as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field ; and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people (unguarded and exposed). Behold he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place (well defended and safe) ; and it will come to pass, when some of them (who would pursue him) be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it, will say, there is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. And (then) he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion shall utterly melt : for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they that are with him are valiant men. Therefore I counsel, that all Israel, be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude : and that thou go to battle in thine own person (getting to thyself all the glory of a conqueror). So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground ; and of him and of all the men that are with him, there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.”

For aught we know, this may be but the brief outline of the speech, which the consummate orator filled up at length : for it is easy to see with what power of argument, imagination and passion he might have dwelt on each successive idea. Or these may be all the words he uttered—his looks, tones,

gestures and pauses doing all the rest. But short or long, when his speech was ended, his work was done. The triumph was complete. The effect was overwhelming. "Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, the counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." And by way of solution for an issue so wonderful, the sacred historian then adds, that the "Lord had appointed to defeat the good or wise counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." We need not pursue the narrative, you know the result : Absalom perished in that battle in which he had hoped to win the glory of a conqueror : and David was restored to his throne. But the single point on which all these great events hung, was the speech of Hushai—a speech perhaps only five minutes long !

Now in these days of windy words and long speeches, when all men claim to be eloquent and talk by the hour, when oratory is often a compound of one grain of sense to a hundred weight of verbiage and nonsense, we are scarcely prepared to appreciate the power of so short a speech as this. Its heavy artillery is fired, not by the hour, but by the minute. The whole work of the orator was probably done in far less time than it has taken us to describe it. But never did human eloquence win a more signal and triumphant victory. In force and brevity, it calls to mind the speeches of our own great Franklin, who is said never to have spoken above fifteen minutes on any occasion, and never to have lost a question on which he had spoken. We believe the Congress of our day, have discovered an exact mathematical formula for the expression of oratory—adopting one hour as the maximum and minimum of every speech, on every subject great and small.

This short speech of Hushai reminds us of an interesting

passage in Macaulay's History of England. In his account of the celebrated trial of the Seven Bishops—a trial which had drawn together the highest eloquence and genius and legal learning of the times, the historian speaks of a young lawyer, John Somers, who as yet had been unknown to fame. "Somers rose last. He spoke little more than five minutes, but every word was full of weighty matter; and when he sat down, his reputation as an orator and a constitutional lawyer was established." The side on which he pleaded in that case, also gained the day.

As it regards the great public interests which were at stake on this speech of Hushai, and the personal courage displayed by the orator, we hardly know where to find a parallel. The nearest that now recurs to us, though still differing in many points, is the celebrated speech of Patrick Henry in the Virginia House of Burgesses of 1765, when he offered the first resolution ever offered in America, against the British Stamp Act, and amidst cries of "Treason! Treason!" from all parts of the house, exclaimed, "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third may profit by their example." Who then could calculate, or who now, the precise amount of impression made by that single burst of eloquence upon the destiny of America and of the human race? In like manner who can tell us what the history of Israel and of the world might have been, if the speech of Hushai had never been delivered in the council of Absalom?

But brief and powerful as was the plea of Somers on the Bishops' trial; brief and effective as were the arguments of Franklin in our halls of legislation; brief and sublime as were the orders of Napoleon or the harangues of Cromwell to his soldiers on the eve of battle; brief, personal and fearless as

was this warning of Henry in the house of Burgesses—still, when we weigh all the circumstances of brevity, difficulty, danger, embarrassment, power and success, Hushai the Archite must be acknowledged to stand at the head of this kind of eloquence—at once the father and the prince of all those orators, who, by a single speech, have changed the destiny of states and empires.

This closes our survey of the eloquence and orators of the Old Testament. And with this, it will perhaps be best for us, though somewhat abruptly and contrary to the original design, to close the present chapter. The theme is so rich, and it has grown upon our hands, so far beyond any expectation entertained at the beginning of our review, that we cannot now, without crowding too much into a single chapter, present anything like an adequate, corresponding view of the eloquent orators of the New Testament. Here then let us pause, reserving the eloquence of the New Testament for separate and fuller discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ELOQUENT ORATORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Examples of Perverted Eloquence—Herod and Tertullus—Speech of Gamaliel—The Eloquent Apollos—Stephen's Address to the Council—Preaching of John the Baptist—Peter as an Orator—Speech of James before the Synod—The Recorder or Town-clerk of Ephesus—The Eloquence of Paul—Paul on Mars Hill—Discourses of our Lord—Conclusion.

HAVING had occasion to divide our subject into two parts, let us now proceed to an examination of the eloquent orators of the New Testament, in the light of those general characteristics and illustrations of eloquence which have already been pointed out. Amongst the multitude of public speakers who figure upon its pages, entitled to wear the starry crown of oratory, it must suffice to sketch only a few of the most prominent and remarkable examples. And for the sake of the contrast which it may furnish, let us begin with the case of those who claimed, but were not entitled to that crown: for here, as in almost every thing else, the Bible teaches by contrast, giving us samples of the bad mingled with the good and the noble.

I.—EXAMPLES OF PERVERTED ELOQUENCE—HEROD AND
TERTULLUS.

There are two, expressly mentioned as orators in the New Testament, who have gained the title only by their abuse of the

gift, and whose names on the sacred pages enjoy only that kind of immortality which unusual infamy gives to the tyrant, or superlative baseness to the sycophantic sophist. They are king Herod and Tertullus—the one a tool in the hands of the wicked, the other a despot whose hands were stained with the blood of the righteous. In the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Acts, we read of a “certain orator named Tertullus”—a Roman orator as the name indicates, who, hired by the Jewish priesthood for the purpose, went down to Cæsarea, to prosecute the Apostle Paul when he was on trial there before the Roman governor Felix. He was one of those special pleaders, to be found in every age, whose talents are offered for sale on all occasions to the highest bidder, and are easily purchased by wealth and power, regardless of truth or justice, right or wrong ; and who, from long practice as well as natural instinct, can always speak better on the side of falsehood than of truth. His object was to convict Paul of sedition, heresy and profanation ; and the weapon with which he attempted it, was flattery—foul and fulsome adulation of the noble virtues and worthy deeds and amiable character of Felix—a man who had once been the base-born freedman of the Emperor Clandius, and who now, according to Tacitus, “exercised royal authority with the spirit of a slave, and indulged himself in every species of cruelty and lust.” It is instructive to see how this specious rhetorician—this fit descendant of the father of lies—this hanger-on to the skirts of men in power—this disgrace of a noble profession, thought, by bending the supple hinges of the knee, and by the smooth and oily common-places of flattery, to carry the day, as it were by implication, against such a man as Paul !

But as the result proved, the eloquence of Tertullus was no match for Paul’s, even at the corrupt bar of Felix. There is

not a finer contrast in all the Bible than is here presented between the Apostle's dignified and manly defence, and this low judicial fawning of his mercenary accuser. Doubtless many persons, have thought the eloquence of Rome to be vastly superior to the eloquence of Jerusalem. But on this, the only occasion where we have ever seen the two in conflict, it is clear, that the Hebrew won a perfect triumph over the Roman orator. We must not however do Rome the injustice to take Tertullus as a fair sample of her oratory. Indeed the world would never have heard of him but for Paul. His name lives on the page of sacred history by an unexpected immortality, because linked with a man whom it was his trade to destroy ; so that " a certain Tertullus " becomes, without a rival, the Tertullus and the sycophant of the New Testament forevermore. With a name as euphonious as that of Tully, he has come down to us distinguished as the Scripture type and representative of all that class of slack-twisted special pleaders who are eloquent for pay, and whose eloquence finds vent in a hypocritical adulation of the possessors of wealth and power.

The other example of perverted eloquence is that of King Herod, recorded in the twelfth chapter of Acts. This cruel and ambitious tyrant, whose hands were stained with the blood of the Apostle James, and would have been stained with Peter's also, but for his miraculous deliverance from prison, seems to have possessed, in a high degree, the gift of popular eloquence ; at least in a high degree for a king. For we are informed by the sacred writer, that, " upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne and made an oration unto the men who had come from Tyre and Sidon. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of God, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord

smote him, because he gave not God the glory ; and he was eaten up of worms and gave up the ghost."

Who can read this account without feeling that it is a fearful thing to abuse the gift of eloquence, without feeling that the Almighty hath set the seal of his hottest displeasure upon the man who does so ? This horrible fate—perhaps the most horrible and shocking recorded in the Bible, seems to have fallen upon Herod, to give the world a warning of the awful responsibility which those incur, who prostitute to base and selfish purposes, the noble endowments of eloquence. In his vanity, and pride, and royalty, he had, like Nebuchadnezzar of old, though with far less excuse, blasphemously arrogated to himself the prerogatives of deity. Instead of rending his clothes, restraining the people, and giving God the glory, as Paul and Barnabas did at Lystra, when the priests of Jupiter and Mercury cried, "The gods have come down among men," and were about to offer sacrifices to them—Herod receives, unrebuked, the idolatrous shout of the multitude, "It is the voice of God, and not of man." It was probably the very homage he had courted. And for receiving it without rebuke, he was rebuked from heaven, so as to stand to all posterity, like Absalom and Catiline, and Mirabeau and Burr, a very name for blasted ambition and talents thrown away. There is nothing in the history of man, which Divine Providence has more frequently and signally frowned upon, than this vain-glorious self-idolatry. Nebuchadnezzar thought himself almost a God, because of 'great Babylon which he had built ;' and he was driven out, bereft of reason, to find a shelter among the beasts of the field. Alexander wished the world to think him a god, because he had conquered it ; and soon reaped a just reward in dying, "as the fool dieth," by drunkenness. Napoleon tried the same experi-

ment of self-deification, in modern times, and while he thought that destiny was his own, Divine providence was only spreading around him those meshes which at last caught and caged him forever. So on a scale infinitely smaller, this blood-stained Herod deemed himself worthy to be called a god, because he had made a great speech ; and for it he was devoured by worms. You remember, that the temptation held out as a bait at the commission of the first sin in Eden, was—"ye shall be as gods : " and ever since that day, whenever this experiment of pride has been repeated, the Providence of God has poured contempt upon the argument of Satan, by leaving those who would be gods to become fools or brutes. Well did the ancient prophet say—" Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in the Lord."

II.—THE SPEECH OF GAMALIEL.

But let us notice next the speech of Gamaliel before the great Sanhedrim, the highest council of the Jews, when the Apostles, a little after the day of Pentecost, were arrested and brought before that body for trial. This speech, as recorded, was exceedingly brief, all being comprised in five verses ; but it is one, which, by its spirit of moderation as well as by the truth of its sentiments, reflects great credit upon its author. It is full of practical common sense, sound views of policy, and faith in the overruling providence of God ; whilst its doctrine of religious toleration must have been greatly in advance of the times. The speech is an argument, sustained by several historical cases, for letting the Apostles alone, or

leaving them to the providence of God, under the conviction that their doctrine, if of men, would soon come to naught, but if of God, could not be successfully resisted. Jew as he was, and a Pharisee of the highest style, his mind seems very clearly to have grasped that grand truth of political and ecclesiastical philosophy, which the church and the world have been so slow to learn—that persecution can never put down a good cause, and is always sure to help a bad one. When we read this wise and moderate speech, we wonder how such a persecutor as Saul of Tarsus could have proceeded from the school of such a master. This, however, may be but another illustration of the very common fact, that the public speeches of great men may be much better than their practice or their creed. Be this, however, as it may, the address of Gamaliel to the council, on the present occasion, was a noble and successful effort on the side of right and justice, well worthy of the man who was universally regarded by his countrymen as the most learned and distinguished doctor of the law then living.

It evidently saved the Apostles from further imprisonment, and most likely from death at the instant. For when Gamaliel rose to speak, the body was filled with rage and clamoring for their destruction. We have only to consider the materials of which that body was composed, and the circumstances under which the speaker interposed his counsel, to see how great must have been his weight of character and weight of words, to bring about such a result as their release. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, whilst the Sadducean party now had a majority and a great ascendancy in the Sanhedrim, and were greatly exasperated with the Apostles for preaching that doctrine which they abhorred the most—the resurrection of the dead. The apostles who had been before them on a former occasion, not

only preached that doctrine boldly to their faces, as they had done to all Jerusalem, but they had openly on both occasions set their authority at defiance, and charged them explicitly with the murder of Jesus. So that now they felt that something decisive must be done : and we are told, “they took counsel to slay them.” At this critical juncture, Gamaliel, although belonging to a party in the minority, stood up and delivered his speech, which may be read at your leisure, and need not be recited now. He was as successful in changing the mind of this council as Hushai had been in changing the council of Absalom. Nothing can reveal more clearly the power of right words, and the influence of a wise counsellor, when brought to bear at the right time and place. When we know the temper of the body he had to address, and know the position he occupied there, we can only account for the fact stated at the close, that “to him they agreed,” by supposing, either that this was a speech of extraordinary power, or that the orator was a man of extraordinary character and influence. The latter, we know to have been true, and doubtless the former was also. We take this speech of Gamaliel, as an admirable example of what may be called deliberative eloquence—succinct, practical, cautious and effective.

This is one of the rarest, as it is one of the noblest and most useful kinds of eloquence. Happy is the church, happy the nation, whose councils are adorned by the presence of these Nestors and Gamaliels of eloquence to direct, or hold in check the ardor of younger men ! This style of eloquence depends upon a clear, sound judgment, integrity of character, and, for the most part, the ripened experience of age. Such was the eloquence of Franklin. Such was the eloquence of Dr. Witherspoon, both in our civil and ecclesiastical councils, who waited till others

had expressed their opinions, and then, "in a concise, clear and forcible manner, gave his views, and generally with a unanimous result." And such eloquence too was often heard in the calm clear voices of those two venerable men, so long associated in life and so little separated in their deaths—Drs. Miller and Alexander.

III.—THE ELOQUENT APOLLOS

But it is time for us to approach another interesting branch of our subject—the eloquence of preaching and of the pulpit. As a matter of course it is in the New Testament that we find the highest models of this species of oratory. Because the preaching of the cross is called foolishness, and "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," we are not to infer, that there was nothing attractive and powerful in the eloquence of the Apostles and first preachers of Christianity. We know, that their Divine master had promised to give them a "mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist." And so we find them in fact, speaking with a freedom and boldness from the very first, which astonished the rulers and councils before whom they were brought. If we had no direct testimony on the point, it would be natural to conclude, that men who spoke "in demonstration of the spirit and with power," must have spoken eloquently. But we are not left to mere inferences. We know, for example, on the testimony of Scripture, that Apollos was "an eloquent man," although we have no report of any of his sermons.

Apollos was one of the earliest ministers of the church of Corinth. So far as we are able to learn his character from a

few brief notices on the sacred pages, he seems to have somewhat resembled the apostle Paul, in enthusiasm, eloquence and diversified learning. Paul mentions him more than once in his epistles. He rebukes the several parties in the Corinthian church for saying, "I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, and another I am of Cephas;" and asks, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" He then adds, "I have planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase." From this alone it is evident that Apollos was a faithful and successful minister of the gospel. But we have a much fuller account of him in the Acts of the Apostles. We there read, that "a certain Jew, Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogues, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more perfectly. And when he was come unto Achaia, he helped them much, who had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

Being thus a Jew by birth, and a native of Alexandria, the seat of Egyptian learning, and enjoying, like Paul, the double advantage of being deeply read in the Jewish scriptures and in the literature of foreign countries (if, as it is natural to do, we suppose him also to have been acquainted with Grecian learning, as he was with Jewish and Egyptian), he must have been eminently fitted to exercise his ministry in the refined cities of Ephesus and Corinth. Possessing also an eloquent tongue, and as we infer from the narrative, unusual powers of reasoning, he

must have been eminently successful as a preacher. It is not wonderful, thus endowed, that he should be mentioned as holding rank with the apostles Paul and Cephas in the public estimation at Corinth. He belongs to a class of characters mentioned in Scripture of whom just enough is known to excite curiosity and make us greatly desire to know more. All that we know of him, though little, is very good ; and from this it is safe to infer that Apollos was one of the most eloquent and accomplished preachers of the primitive church

IV.—STEPHEN'S ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL.

Going back, somewhat, in the order of events, we find another name, worthy of honorable mention on the roll of New Testament orators. It is that of Stephen, one of the first deacons, and the very first martyr, of the Christian church. Though not immediately called by his office to preach the gospel, yet he appears, very soon after being appointed a deacon, to have engaged in the discussions of the synagogue, where he reasoned with the people, and defended the cause of his Master with such wisdom and spirit, that his opponents, unable to answer him or put him down by words, hurried him away for condemnation to the great council. His speech before that body, on the charge of blasphemy, as alleged by suborned witnesses, was delivered in answer to the question of the high priest, its presiding officer—"Are these things so?" In the apprehension of all present, who had heard the awful charges, that question was virtually a demand, why sentence of death should not be passed against him ; for their law had but one punishment for such a crime when proved.

We know not what his whole argument would have been, if

he had not been interrupted ; but if we may judge by that part of it which he was permitted to deliver, it must have been a sublime and eloquent vindication. Interrupted as it was, it fills up the whole of the seventh chapter of the Acts, and with the exception of some of our Saviour's discourses, it has the distinction of being the longest speech recorded in the Bible. Paul, then a young man, was present and heard it, and had probably himself been disputing with Stephen in the synagogue. Paul, no doubt remembering it well long afterwards, communicated it to Luke, who was thus enabled to report it accurately and fully. The speech evidently glows with all the enthusiasm of eloquence. Though the speaker was fully aware of his perilous position—that on his words his life hung as by a thread—yet he betrays no indication of embarrassment, or haste or fear. With the utmost deference to the rulers who sat to judge him, and with perfect self-possession, he takes for his theme “the God of Glory,” and with devout and patriotic ardor, traces the long line of his providences towards “the seed of Abraham his chosen.”

Before such an audience, who can imagine a more thrilling theme, or a more exciting scene. Arraigned to answer for his life to the charge of blasphemy against Moses and the law, and the God of Israel—brought to the bar of that august Sanhedrim, whose long white beards and robes of office gave it the aspect of infallible wisdom—inspired himself with a wisdom more than mortal under the teachings of the Holy Ghost—he stood, as his Saviour had done in that same presence, calm, serene, self-composed and trusting in God—his face shining as it had been the face of an angel, his eye lifted up to those heavens, where a little after he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of the eternal throne, his voice rising and swelling respon-

sive to all the deep emotions of a soul filled with the love of Christ. Suddenly, and apparently in the midst of his discourse, he changes his tone into one of severe rebuke. At this point, says Dr. Dick, "It is probable that his hearers gave signs of impatience ; and Stephen perceiving that they were about to interrupt him, seized the moments which remained to him, to tell them a few unwelcome truths, which would serve as his dying testimony against the incorrigible enemies of his Saviour." Accordingly, he makes no allusion to the charges preferred against himself, but lays at their own door the much more awful charge of having murdered the Son of God. Feeling that the cause of truth demanded such fidelity, whatever might be the consequence to himself, he bursts forth into the following terrible invective : "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One ; of whom ye have been betrayers and murderers ; who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it."

This was more than they could bear. No Gamaliel, even had he been present, and so disposed, was then able to pour into their counsels a spirit of moderation and wisdom. All further formalities of law were stopped. They could not wait to take a vote. They were clamorous for blood. Says the record, "They were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth. They cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city and stoned him." And as if to mark the greatness of the contrast between the bigoted rage of the persecutor and the peaceful spirit of the victim, the sacred writer adds : "He

called upon God, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;' and kneeling down he cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he said this, he fell asleep." Glorious termination of a brief and glorious life! The historic page recounts many scenes of thrilling eloquence, in life and in death. But out of the Bible, it contains no record of a voice more eloquent, even to the last agonies of death, than Stephen's. And when that bold and eloquent tongue lay silent in the dust, it was only to receive a crown of martyrdom which shall last forever. As he fell asleep in Jesus and the last prayerful accents of the living voice died away, another voice of eloquence that never dies, began to plead, and by it, he being dead yet speaketh. His example took up the unfinished argument of his lips, and bore it down to every successive generation. The classic Greeks showed their appreciation of eloquence by giving it an apotheosis amongst the immortal gods: but here in the early death and heroic martyrdom of Stephen, eloquence found a different and truer apotheosis.

V.—PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

But leaving this true-hearted speaker in all the glory of his early martyrdom, and going still farther back in the sacred history, we hear the voice of another bold advocate of truth and reprover of wickedness in high places—the first indeed that is heard in the opening pages of the New Testament. It is the voice of one who, for a season, was held in universal admiration, as the greatest prophet, preacher, and reformer of the times. It is that long-expected voice, which breaks forth from the wilderness of Judea, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight," and is heard again on the banks of the Jordan, pointing out the Messiah and saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." It is John the Baptist, the connecting link of two dispensations—the last and greatest prophet of the old, the first and most honored preacher of the new, in whom the law uttered its voice of thunder mingled with the sweet music of a gospel of repentance and peace.

We have no detailed report of the preaching of John ; but we have many short extracts, varying in length from one verse to ten, which seem to be taken from his speeches on different occasions, and, as in a nutshell, to contain the substance of his preaching. Judging from these, as well as from the testimony of our Saviour to his eminence, and from the deep impression made on the public mind of the nation, we must conclude, that there was something unusually powerful and effective in the discourses of this preacher of the desert. It is recorded as the saying of the people on one occasion, that, "John did no miracle ;" so that the whole effect of his ministry must be ascribed under God to his character as a prophet and his eloquence as a preacher ; and this effect, we know, was so great, that all the people were in expectation concerning him, "musing in their hearts if he were not the Christ ;" their highest authorities were willing for a reason to rejoice in him, as "a burning and shining light," and even the wicked Herod "did many things and heard him gladly."

Now, in speaking of John and other preachers of the New Testament as eloquent orators, we do not wish to convey to your minds the impression, that their sole power, or even their chief power, lay in their gifts of eloquence. We have no desire to ascribe any undue influence and importance to their natural

endowments, to the disparagement of those which were supernatural. We wish you always to remember that all these inspired preachers, just like the poets of the Bible, would have been nothing and could have done nothing successfully in their great work, though they had spoken with the tongues of men and of angels, without the grace of God and the power of the Holy Ghost. Still it is just as true, that they had natural endowments, as that they had these high spiritual and miraculous endowments. And God wrought in them by the one as well as by the other. For the most part, these mighty, superhuman gifts and endowments found utterance and expression through the medium of those faculties and attainments which they possessed either by nature or education. And we are not to think that their speech was any the less real, persuasive, eloquent, effective human speech, fitted to melt the heart and move the will, because they often spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. So far from disparaging the eloquence of the New Testament then, because its orators spoke with an inspiration direct from heaven, we ought rather to exalt its power and influence because it possessed this Divine element. This Divine influence left John, and Stephen and Apollos, as free to exercise all their natural gifts, and to use all the arts of persuading men, as if they had been under no such afflatus. Let no one object then to the application of the term eloquent to their preaching. And when we attribute to such preaching, the usual effects of great and powerful eloquence, let no one imagine we are making void the grace and power of God. We are only magnifying the power of that grace which can employ the tongue of the eloquent, as it employs other things, for the accomplishment of its grand designs.

Great must have been the power of eloquence, in John's case,

destitute as he was of the power of working miracles, to draw together the vast multitudes of all ranks and classes of the people that crowded to his baptism. Clothed as he was in the garb of one of the old prophets, much no doubt of his popularity and power would be due to the estimation in which the people held a character so awful and sublime. But as there had been no great prophet in Israel for four hundred years, and as John was yet a young man of thirty, how could his title to the prophetic office be established so soon and so universally? The only answer seems to be in the extraordinary character of his preaching. By his bold, energetic, authoritative, heart-searching eloquence, as a preacher of righteousness and a teacher come from God, and by this alone, could he establish thus easily his mission as a prophet in Israel. Nothing less than this could have attracted from their homes and their business the myriads of people that waited upon his ministry on the banks of the Jordan. For we are told that all Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region around, went out to him there. Short as it is, enough remains to us of the preaching in which he warned that generation of vipers to flee from the wrath to come, besides the fact that he at last fell a victim for his fidelity in reproving vice, to convince us that John must have possessed, in a remarkable degree, the attributes of a great popular orator.

Gilfillan speaks of him thus : " He attended no school of the prophets, he sat at the feet of no Gamaliel ; but among the rocks and the caves, and the solitudes of the wilderness, he extracted the sublime and stern spirit of his office. The tameless torrent, dashing by, taught him his eloquence. The visions of God furnished him with his theology. He had indeed no rhythmic utterance, and figurative flights : but he had the dress, the spirit, the power, the wild-eyed fervor, and the boldness of

his prototypes : and hence the wilderness of Jordan rang to his voice, Judea was struck to the heart at his appearance, and Jerusalem went out as one man to his baptism."

This description may be in part true ; but there is much more probable truth in the opinion of Dr. Kitto, that John being of the tribe of Levi, an only son, and withal a child of so much promise at his birth, had received the very best professional education his country could afford ; and that he retired to the wilderness for meditation, according to the custom of the times, only a few years prior to his entering on the great mission of his life ; where he indeed remained, sustained chiefly by locusts and wild honey, till the day of his showing unto Israel.

But we must not dwell too long on this interesting and remarkable character—combining at once all the highest excellences of prophet, preacher and reformer, in the life of a young man. With his name we are accustomed to associate the great and good of other times. We think of this light of a dark age, this harbinger of the Messiah's advent, in connection with those morning stars of the great reformation—Wickliffe, Jerome, and John Huss. There was something also of the same noble daring, and singleness of purpose, and energetic eloquence in Luther and Calvin. But perhaps the nearest approximation to his spirit, and character, and work, which the ministry of modern times has ever presented, was exemplified in the stern heroic preaching of Scotland's great reformer, John Knox.

VI.—PETER AS AN ORATOR.

But what shall we say of the preaching of the Apostle Peter? He stands forth prominently in the whole evangelical history as one of the greatest public speakers of the New Testament. During the life of Christ, we find him the foremost speaker on all occasions; and after the ascension, he seems to have stood forward the acknowledged leader and advocate of the apostolic band, whenever their cause needed to be publicly defended. From the bold promptitude and ready facility with which he expressed his opinions, as well as from the ardent enthusiasm that marked his character, it is obvious that he was by nature endowed with many of the best gifts of eloquence. The two sons of Zebedee, were called by our Saviour, "Boanerges," or "sons of thunder;" which would lead us to suppose that they too must have possessed, in high degree, at least some of the characteristics of eloquence. But notwithstanding this, we find Peter, wherever public speaking was called for, taking precedence of James and John, as he did of all the rest.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we find reports, more or less full, of some nine or ten of the discourses delivered by Peter, at different times, to the people or their rulers, or to his brethren of the church. For example, we have his address to the company of a hundred and twenty disciples immediately after the ascension of Jesus; his longer discourse on the day of Pentecost; his speech to the multitude in Solomon's porch, in connection with John, at the healing of the lame man; his defence before the council on the day following, and another similar defence not long afterwards; his awful rebuke of Ananias and Sapphira at Jerusalem, and also of Simon Magus

the sorcerer at Samaria ; his sermon before Cornelius and his household at Cæsarea, the first sermon to the Gentiles ; his subsequent vindication of that matter before the brethren of the church ; and last of all, his speech in the first general Synod of Jerusalem on the observance of the ceremonial law among the gentile converts. In all of these, as also in his two general epistles, we find many striking indications of that naturally vigorous intellect and high-toned eloquence which so often burst forth in the presence of the Master. There was not a little of the heroic and sublime in that calm and dignified protest to the council, when forbidden to preach any more under pain of imprisonment or death : “ Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye ; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

But the most remarkable and effective of all these, was his discourse on the day of Pentecost, which, along with the labors of his colleagues, resulted in the conversion of three thousand souls. Of course it is not to be understood that these conversions were the work of Peter’s eloquence, except so far as that eloquence was inspired of God, and blessed of God, as an instrument in the hands of the Divine Spirit. No real conversion on that, or on any other occasion, is the work of mere human oratory. Peter may have been, and probably was, an eloquent man all his life ; and when inspired of God, as he was on the day of Pentecost, even that natural eloquence must have appeared immeasurably more eloquent than it ever did before. But no eloquence of Peter’s, whether natural or inspired, could ever convert a sinner without the special and direct agency of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, it is at the same time true, that God, who works by the most appropriate means in effect-

ing human salvation, just as he does in other things, employs the tongue of the eloquent in saving men. And although there was the direct miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, accompanied by visible signs and mighty wonders—cloven tongues of fire and new languages which they had never learned—still it was by the preaching of Peter and the eleven associates—their bold, faithful, pointed, heart-searching proclamation of the truth as it is in Jesus—that three thousand souls were added to the church on that memorable day.

And when in the annals of Christianity did any sermon, or as we should rather say, set of sermons, on a single day, produce so large a result? If eloquence may be measured by its fruits, this day's preaching of the inspired Apostles must stand without a parallel in the annals of preaching. It was indeed a day of Pentecost to Christianity—a glorious ingathering of her first fruits. And God seems thus early to have established a precedent and a model for the preachers and the churches of all coming generations.

Now you may be familiar with the achievements of pulpit eloquence in modern times; you may have read with what breathless interest, all classes of people, the great and the learned, as well as the poor and unlettered, hung upon the lips of Whitfield, of Chalmers, of Edward Irving, of Robert Hall; how vast audiences were electrified, and half entranced by the beseeching music of the voice, when uttered by young men like Summerfield or Larned; how congregated thousands were alternately bathed in tears and stricken down in terror in the powerful revivals of Jonathan Edwards, or of the old divines of Scotland; how a grand assemblage of corrupt and courtly auditors were made to start to their feet instinctively, as over

the mortal remains of Louis XIV. Massillon pronounced the words—"God only is great;" but after all these and a thousand kindred triumphs of the pulpit, the conversion of three thousands souls in one day from the ranks of men whose hands were stained so recently with the blood of Jesus, must still remain as the greatest achievement ever made by the eloquence of the pulpit. You may, if you please, dispute the claims of the Bible orators to superiority in other departments; but there can be no dispute here. There has been no preaching on earth, so eloquent, so powerful, so triumphant, so sublime as that which the Bible records.

VII.—SPEECH OF JAMES BEFORE THE SYNOD OF JERUSALEM.

We may notice next, as a fine example of dignified, deliberative eloquence, the speech of the apostle James, before the first general council of Jerusalem, the substance of which is reported in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. This is not James, the brother of John, for he had already been put to death by the sword of Herod; but that James who wrote the general epistle, whom Paul calls the "brother of our Lord," and who was distinguished amongst his contemporaries by the title of "James the Just." It is remarkable that nothing remains in the New Testament of any of the sermons of the brothers, James and John, though as "sons of thunder," they must have acted a conspicuous part in preaching the Gospel. It is well observed by a recent writer, in regard to these brothers, as showing how different may be the career of usefulness to which Christ calls his ministers, that "one died before the middle of the first Christian century, the other lived to its close; one

of them was called to lay down his life, the first martyr of the twelve, almost before the gospel had been preached out of Jerusalem ; whilst the other outlived all the band, saw the gospel established in every land, and at last died in peace." Little did their ambitious mother dream of the strange but glorious destiny that awaited the one and the other, when she asked that her two sons might sit on the right hand and the left of the throne of Jesus !

But to return to the other James ; he seems, as an apostle, to have exercised his ministry at Jerusalem ; for many years, to have been a man of great weight in counsel, and probably to have been the president or moderator of the synod just referred to. On the solemn and important questions which had to be decided at that meeting, we are told there had been much controversy. In the synod itself there was no little disputation ; for the main question at issue, touching the binding authority of the law of Moses upon the gentile churches, was one of no little perplexity to men educated as they had been. Several had advanced their opinions. Peter had delivered a short speech full of practical wisdom and sound but liberal doctrines. Paul and Barnabas, who had brought the question up from Antioch, had each in turn addressed the assembly, declaring all the wonderful things God was working among the Gentiles. James waited till all were done, and then spoke. His antecedents were of such a character as might have inclined him to take the side of a rigid adherence to the Mosaic institutions. But his mind seems at once to have grasped the true doctrine as already expounded by Peter, who had received a revelation on the subject. He gives his opinion in accordance with that view, adducing arguments from Scripture to support it. The speech, as reported, is short, but full of weighty matter. It seems to have

reconciled all conflicting views of both parties, and its sentiments, with almost its very words, were immediately adopted and sent forth to the churches in the form of a decree of the council.

This whole case is one of great interest to us, because it shows how even the inspired Apostles, who had received direct revelations from the Lord, had still to use their natural faculties and bring together their united wisdom, in arriving at the knowledge of the truth on many important points. We see them meeting with the elders of the church, consulting, deliberating, debating, and at last coming to a unanimous decision, which was the result of conference—mind meeting mind in argument, opinion modifying opinion in counsel, and truth explaining and enlarging truth, when thus laid together. Instead of giving a special revelation on the subject, or rather, after he had given such a revelation to one of them, the Lord saw fit to leave them to discover the whole truth by the ordinary means of mutual conference and consultation.

VIII.—THE RECORDER OR TOWN-CLERK OF EPHESUS.

Let us turn now to an example of public speaking altogether different from any we have yet contemplated ; for it is remarkable how diversified are the styles of oratory exemplified in the New Testament. This is an address, delivered to a collection of the people which had all the characteristics of an infuriated, ungovernable mob. It must be acknowledged that it requires talents of a peculiar order to address such an assembly. Perhaps the most difficult task which an orator ever essays, is to oppose—successfully to oppose—the demands of an unreasoning, raging mob. It is worthy of remark, how many

notices of the doings of such mobs we find in the New Testament. It was a mob, that under color of the forms of law, crucified the son of God. It was a mob that more than once, in the streets of Jerusalem, took up stones to stone him. It was such a mob that, at Nazareth, led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, intending to cast him down the precipice. It was a grave and dignified assembly, madly converting itself into a mob, that put Stephen to death. It was through mob violence that Paul was, in many places, expelled from the synagogue, scourged and cast into prison ; and at one time stoned and left for dead. It was one of the most fierce and diabolical of mobs, that once rushed upon him in the temple of Jerusalem, casting off their clothes, throwing dust into the air, crying "away with such a fellow from the earth," and purposing to tear him in pieces.

But of all the mobs mentioned in the New Testament, this one at Ephesus is to us, the most curious and instructive, as well from its being so graphically described and so near akin to the mobs of our own times, as from the remarkably adroit and sensible speech of the town-clerk who at last quelled it.

You will get a wrong impression of the character of this officer, if you think of him only as a clerk or secretary of some petty court in Ephesus. In addition to his office of recorder, or keeper of the archives of the city, he was, for the time being, a magistrate, and indeed the chief magistrate of Ephesus. His office, which was held for one year, corresponded very nearly with the office of mayor in one of our cities : so that the town-clerk was the highest presiding officer of that great city at the date of this occurrence. And with the knowledge of this fact, you will be better prepared to understand the reasons of that success with which he allayed so great a storm by so short a

speech. In virtue of his office, it was his right and duty to preside in the lawful assemblies of the people, and hence we find him acting so conspicuous a part at this unlawful and immense gathering in the Ephesian theatre. Dr. Kitto, from whom these particulars have been chiefly derived, tells us, that "The theatre at Ephesus was the largest structure of the kind ever erected by the Greeks, and was capable of seating fifty thousand persons. It was excavated from the sloping side of mount Prion, looking towards the west, and was faced with a portico. The exterior diameter was 660 feet. Like all other ancient theatres, it had no roof, but the spectators protected themselves from the sun by head-gear adapted for a screen, or by holding a light parasol in their hand, or sometimes a kind of tarpaulin was drawn across the theatre itself. Here the scenic representations were exhibited, and here were held the assemblies of the people. This theatre is still discoverable by its ruins, which are of immense grandeur. Its interest to us arises from the certainty, with which it can be identified as the scene of one of Paul's most perilous conflicts." And here he adds—"We witness a curious, but not unparalleled union, of the 'great goddess Diana,' with the great god Self, whose worship still exists, though that of Diana is extinct."

The vast multitude of craftsmen and others was headed by Demetrius, one of the chief manufacturers of "silver shrines of Diana." Having first filled the whole city with confusion, and sought in vain to find Paul, they caught two of his companions, and rushed with one accord into the theatre, rending the air with the shout—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians." This wily and selfish man, who had raised all the uproar, was actuated by the basest motives of gain. But with the true instinct of a demagogue, he had contrived to cloak this love of filthy

lucre, under the specious pretence of devotion to the glory of their presiding deity. His speech to his fellow-craftsmen, so loud in professions of concern for the temple of the great goddess, whose "magnificence not only Asia, but all the world worshipped," is about the most finished specimen of the peculiar art of demagogism, to be found in ancient times.

When the vast stream had poured itself into the theatre—some crying one thing and some another, and many not knowing why they were there at all, but all ready for deeds of blood—Paul who had thus far kept out of the way, was informed of their proceedings ; and learning, that his two companions were in the hands of the mob, he determined to go himself and share their danger. Nothing in all the heroic history of that great apostle, more strikingly displays the noble generosity and high-souled courage of the man, than that he should dare to appear before such a mob. His brethren, knowing the peril, would not suffer it ; and in this purpose they were sustained by certain of the chief men of Asia, or religious officers of the city, who were friends of Paul.

In the meantime a Jew, named Alexander, probably with a view to shield his own countrymen from the fury now directed against the Christians, tried to get a hearing. He came forward, beckoning with the hand, and "would have made a defence to the people." But they had met for deeds, not words—they had come for execution and not speech-making. They only drowned his voice in a louder and longer cry of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." This we are told they kept up, "all with one voice about the space of two hours."

At this stage of affairs the recorder seems to have arrived ; or it may be, he was there before, waiting the favorable moment to interpose with his authority. And when at length he

had so far appeased the multitude as to gain a hearing, he delivered that brief, and for such an occasion, admirable speech, which is recorded by Luke in six verses, every word of which was directly to the point, and full of strong common sense. We need not cite it here, as you can examine it at your leisure. But if we judge it from the stand-point of heathenism at which it was delivered, and try to fancy ourselves in the recorder's place, it is difficult to conceive how he could have acquitted himself with more dignity, more wisdom and more success. He said precisely the right words at precisely the right time. "And when he had so spoken he dismissed the assembly." The one wise man had turned away the wrath of a multitude, and delivered the city. There was an influence going out from the man of high official station over all the masses of that fierce mob ; but there was a much mightier influence going out from the words of wisdom which he uttered. It is not every city of a Christian land that is blest with so wise, so influential, so eloquent a mayor as the town-clerk of Ephesus. Heathen though he was, he has the distinction of having his speech recorded on the sacred page.

IX—THE ELOQUENCE OF PAUL.

But Paul—what shall we say, how shall we speak of Paul? Where shall we find words to rise to the matchless majesty of such an orator as Paul? Every association that clusters around his name inspires the mind with ideas of éloquence. Whatever he writes, whenever he speaks, wherever he goes, his words and actions all burn with éloquence. He rises with ease and grandeur to the sublimest truths of revelation : and he bends with grace and dignity to the minutest details of daily life

and duty. Whatever subject he touches, however lowly, or obscure, or commonplace, becomes at once radiant with the light of truth, and sublime through the inspirations of eloquence. There is, in the whole character and career of this great apostle, such a wideness of view, such a completeness of design, such a sustained and lofty bearing, such an assemblage of rare and noble attainments, that we scarcely know what to admire the most—whether Paul the man or Paul the minister—Paul as theologian or as moral hero—as logician or as orator—as the champion of truth, or as the martyr of Christianity. It is no exaggeration, speaking of mere men, to call him the prince of preachers and the prince of moral heroes. And though he calls himself the least of the Apostles, it is manifest that in many respects he stands at the head of the list. Of mere men, there is no character in the Bible, except Moses, that deserves to be put in comparison with him—none that accomplished so much while living—none that after death has exerted so great an influence. Regarded simply as a man of genius, apart from all his supernatural gifts, we suppose there was not a human mind to be found in all the length and breadth of the Roman world of his generation, more richly endowed with the attributes of greatness than Paul's.

It would seem that Divine grace had so called him to his work, and so equipped and adorned him for it, as to give the world, in one living man, a specimen of the whole power of Christianity upon the character—to illustrate by example what human nature might become and might achieve when controlled and sanctified by grace. Excepting only the character of Jesus and the preaching of Jesus, there is no character nor voice of eloquence, even in the New Testament, which can stir all the depths of the soul to sympathy and admiration, like Paul's. Eighteen centuries have responded with reiterated and increas-

ing applause to that eloquence ; eternity alone can disclose the influence of such a character and such a life.

We need not speak now of that peculiar style of familiar yet elevated conversation—that earnest, importunate, enthusiastic, authoritative talking, as it were face to face with the churches, which runs through all his Epistles, and distinguishes them as the most eloquent and effective letters that were ever penned. We need not speak of the unreported eloquence of those almost countless occasions, when in the synagogues of the Jews, before the temple shrines of the Greeks, in the streets, houses, and market places of the whole Roman Empire, from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Athens, from Athens to Rome, he lifted up his voice with mighty reasonings to convince and persuade men. And we need not speak of that deeper eloquence of living and heroic deeds, which, in defiance of all opposition, uttered itself unceasingly in planting churches, and carrying the glad tidings of salvation to regions “where Christ had not been named.” Let us pass over everything of this kind, to notice some of those public discourses of the great apostle which, to some extent, have been recorded in the book of Acts.

Besides brief addresses on different occasions, we find reports of six of his speeches, which are given at considerable length. And these were delivered under circumstances calculated to call forth his highest powers of eloquence. For instance, we have a long address, setting forth the way of life by the gospel, delivered to the men of Israel in the synagogue at Antioch : we have his short and masterly address to the men of Athens on Mars Hill : his pathetic farewell address to the elders of the Ephesian Church ; his bold and powerful speech to the mob of Jerusalem from the steps of the tower ; his dignified and tri-

umphant vindication at Cæsarea against the charge of Tertullus ; and his sublime defence of himself and apology for Christianity before King Agrippa and the court of Festus. The world has justly ranked these six speeches amongst the noblest triumphs of pulpit eloquence. For although we have but a fragment on which to rest our judgment ; still it is easy, even from that, to see what the whole must have been. It is not easy, however, to decide which of the six is the master-piece, so perfectly adapted is each to the end which the speaker had in view.

The last of them—the defence before King Agrippa and his royal sister Bernice, has generally been regarded as the most eloquent, which may be owing partly to its being reported at greater length than the others, and partly to the attending circumstances. It was manifestly a speech of great power, aside from any consideration of the occasion that called it forth, or the impressions produced by it. But when we take all these into consideration, and think of the circumstances in which both the speaker and his auditors stood, it must be pronounced an effort of the very highest moral sublimity. Reflect a moment on the scene.

Paul was a prisoner in bonds, still awaiting his trial, as he had been during two long years of delay, and now at last appealing for a hearing to the bar of Augustus at Rome. Just at this time, Agrippa, attended by Bernice, who, though a sister, was suspected of bearing to him a relation which no sister could lawfully hold, came down to Cæsarea to pay their court to Porcius Festus, the newly appointed governor of the province. Having heard the particulars of Paul's case, and probably a good report as to his eloquence, the Jewish King, who, notwithstanding his Herodian blood, and his sinful life, seems to

have had some natural conscience left, expressed a desire to hear Paul speak. Accordingly we are told that, “on the morrow, when Agrippa was come and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains and the principal men of the city,” evidently making a large and imposing assembly, “at Festus’s commandment Paul was brought forth.” “And Festus”—apparently feeling now that he had a prisoner worth showing, and whose showing contributed something to his own self-importance—“said, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed unto Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O King Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.” “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, ‘thou art permitted to speak for thyself.’ And Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:”—“I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews. Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews. Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews: who knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. And now

I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise, made of God unto our fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes instantly serving God, day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews."

Such is his opening of the case; such his exordium and clearing of the question. But you are doubtless familiar with the speech, and we need not recite it further now. You remember with what impressive grace and courtesy and ease, he addressed himself to the august auditory. You remember with what self-possessed dignity, with what fearless fidelity, with what conscious superiority over his lordly judges, despite their interruptions, he waxed warmer and warmer under the kindlings of his lofty theme, until they not only held him guiltless of any crime, but almost envied his position as a Christian. You remember with what earnestness, and with what irresistible logic, he made the appeal direct, and pressed home the "argumentum ad hominem," to the very conscience of the king—"For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead." And when at last, these appeals had drawn from the king, the unexpected declaration—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," the apostle, seizing so good an opportunity to deepen the impressions he had made, instantly replied—"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether, such as I am, except these bonds." "This," says Dr. Kitto, "was a master-stroke of true eloquence, that the finest orators of Greece or Rome never equalled. The effect was electrical. Agrippa started from his

seat, and broke up the court, by departing with the governor and Bernice, as if afraid that he should commit himself further were he to listen any longer."

X.—PAUL'S ADDRESS ON MARS HILL.

But if we should single out any one of the six recorded speeches of the apostle, as being the sublimest triumph of his eloquence, we should take his address at Athens, before the Court of Areopagus on Mars Hill, although the report given of it is evidently but a brief compend of what he said on that occasion. Briefs and skeletons of sermons are proverbially dry. But it is not so with those of the Scriptures. There is a vital spirit still breathing in every word and sentence of these inspired fragments. The one now before us possesses a peculiar interest, from the fact that it was the first meeting, at least on anything like a grand scale, of the eloquence of Jerusalem with that of Athens. It was the first formal and direct assault, which this new and foreign religion, called Christianity, had as yet made upon the fables of the ancient classical mythology in the home of their nativity and the citadel of their strength. Many triumphs it had won in Ephesus and other cities of Asia Minor. Something too had been achieved in the chief cities of Macedonia. But this was now the first promulgation of the truth to the Greeks themselves on their own classic soil. It was the first direct collision between the educated, imaginative mind of the Asiatic world, and the educated mind of the highly polished, artistic people of the European world. It was Shem and Japheth coming together after long centuries of separation, each bringing the religious system he had been perfecting for

ages, at last to try their strength, on the arena of reason and argument, in an open contest for the mastery of the world. Versed as Paul was, from his singular advantages of genealogy, nativity and education, both in the learning of the East and the West, and able, even before his endowment with the gift of tongues, to speak to the Hebrews in Hebrew, and to the Greeks in Greek, he was eminently fitted to represent the cause of Christianity at this Athenian meeting of the two worlds, the two races, and the two religions. We can well imagine with what enthusiasm, and with what yearning desire to save souls, such a man as Paul must have trod, for the first time, the classic soil of Attica—the far-famed land of poetry and the arts, of heroes and sages, of temple-crowned hills and story-telling glens, of gushing fountains, bright skies, and balmy air : and how he would feel when at last he stood within the gates of that proud city, which was the boast of Greece, the shrine of genius, the home of art, the cradle of philosophy, but at the same time the seat of every false god. And so, we are told, that while tarrying at Athens for his companions, “ his spirit was stirred within him ” when he saw such a city wholly given to idolatry.

Disputing first with his own countrymen there in the synagogue, as was his custom wherever he went, and then with all others whom he met, from day to day, in the market-place, he was, after a while, encountered by a company of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, who brought him to the great council hall of the city on the top of Mars Hill, in order to hear more fully what this babbler and setter forth of strange gods had to say. In that place the Athenians—professional teachers, poets, rhetoricians, critics, philosophers, logicians—were accustomed to meet daily for the purpose of “ telling or hearing some new

thing." In that place also the highest court of the city was accustomed to hold its sessions. In that very hall the great Socrates, four centuries before, had been arraigned, tried and condemned to death, on this same charge of inculcating the worship of strange gods.

It is obvious from the narrative and from the apostle's speech that he had been brought into the presence of this court, not merely out of idle curiosity to hear him speak, but for the purpose of an investigation, and if need be a trial, touching the doctrines he had been inculcating during his stay at Athens. And if so, it is equally obvious, that he was in no little peril of his life, in case he should appear to have been setting forth the worship of some new, unauthorized God. For, as Dr. Kitto again tells us, you must bear in mind, that whilst the Athenians were willing and even anxious to establish the worship of every distinguished deity in the world, it was a matter which belonged solely to the state. It was death for an individual unauthorized to establish or teach any new worship. How then did Paul, who had been boldly preaching Jesus and the Resurrection, manage to exonerate himself from this dangerous charge? In the most admirable manner in the world. By a single sentence in the very opening of his speech, which must have relieved every mind in his audience, and elicited new interest in his cause, he extricated himself from all suspicions on that point. Taking advantage of his recent observations in their city, and with a skill and ingenuity, that would have done credit to any orator in the world, abstaining from any allusion to their laws or his implied violation of them, he virtually told them, that it was his mission to declare to them, that Deity, the creator of heaven and earth, whom they had been ignorantly worshipping, and whom the state had already recognized by that public altar

which it had erected, with an inscription—"To the unknown God."

"Having thus skillfully opened his case," says the learned author just referred to, "Paul proceeded with his statement ; and it is very safe to say, that in all the choicest oratory of the heathen world, there is nothing to compare with the splendor, majesty and dignity with which he entered upon his explanation ; and the felicity is no less admirable than the boldness with which he refers to the scene by which he was surrounded. The court of the Areopagus was uncovered, and above him was only the canopy of heaven. Around him was plain and mountain, and in the distance was the expanse of ocean. Immediately before him was the Acropolis, with the glorious Parthenon, and the colossal statue of Minerva, and a thousand other images, many of them glittering with silver. How impressively then, but with what peril, must he have uttered these words—' God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; neither is worshipped with men's hands.'"

Now, if ever the three elements of a great occasion, a great subject and a great man conspired together to give the eloquent Athenians a specimen of a great speech, it was the case when this lone but fearless ambassador of the true God, knowing as he did the absolute certainty of all that he preached, stood up in that venerable hall which erst had rung with the clarion voice of Demosthenes, to proclaim the sublime truths of Christianity to these worshippers of the unknown God. Imagine if you can the moral glory of such an occasion, such a theme and such a preacher. He stands in an open court, on an elevated point of the city, where there is everything around him, in earth

and sky, on land and sea, in nature and art to strike the outward sense, and fill the soul with emotions of awe and grandeur. He stands in the midst of living men who claim to be the elite of the earth, of monuments dedicated to the mighty dead of all past generations, of temples and oracles sacred to the presiding deities of every nation. And stands alone, sole representative of a religion, which he knows by revelation from heaven shall one day dethrone every deity, shut up every temple and silence every oracle in Athens and in Greece. And his task is so to preach that religion now, as not to arouse the prejudices or excite the wrath of these bigoted and boastful philosophers.

Most nobly and successfully does he perform the arduous task. In the language of Gilfillan : "He rises to the majesty of the scene. He fills easily and amply the great sphere which he finds around him. He feels the dignity of his position. He knows he has a message from the God who made that ocean, these mountains and these heavens. The men of Athens are clamoring for some new thing ; he has the latest news from the throne of God. They are worshipping the 'unknown God ;' it is his task to unveil his image and show him shining in the face of Jesus Christ. In nine immortal sentences he condenses all the primal truths of nature and of Christianity."

But as the speech is short and at all times worthy of our profoundest study, let us now quote it entire :

"Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (or rather ye are overmuch devout). For as I passed and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown God.' Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; neither

is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life and breath and all things. And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation : that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said—' For we are also his offspring.' For as much then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead—a doctrine deeply repugnant to the Greeks, though they held the immortality of the soul—" Some mocked, but others said we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him and believed ; among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." His labor had not been in vain. These persons, no doubt, became the nucleus of a church at Athens—the first fruits of Attica to the Lord.

Now what, think you, would have been the judgment of mankind, if, instead of a mere synopsis like this, one of Paul's discourses as long as those of Demosthenes and Cicero, had come down to us? Suppose we had one of his speeches as complete

as the longest of his epistles. He had too much to do to write his sermons ; and there was no one to report them in full. But suppose we could now read all he said on Mars Hill, or all that speech which made Felix tremble, or that which almost persuaded Agrippa, or that which he delivered at Jerusalem in Hebrew, what would be our judgment of his eloquence, arguing from the less to the greater? After reading Demosthenes through an hour's oration, we do not wonder that the Athenians rent the air with the cry—"Let us rise and march against Philip." But suppose the world had to measure the calibre of the Grecian or the Roman orator by fragments of their speeches, no longer than those of Paul on Mars Hill. Might not the world greatly modify its opinions as to their comparative merits?

But it may be objected to all this, that Paul speaks disparagingly of his own eloquence. We do not wonder that he, who had seen the glory of Jesus, who had been "caught up into paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," and who in view of the Divine holiness was accustomed to deprecate all excellency of speech or wisdom of words, as used by the men of this world, and to speak of himself as the chief of sinners—should also speak of his "bodily presence as weak and his speech is contemptible." But whatever he thought of himself, it is clear that none of his hearers, not even the enemies who said so, ever thought his speech contemptible or his bodily presence weak. Though his name was Paul, the little, he had a mouth and wisdom which none of his enemies could gainsay or resist—an eloquence of utterance and a soul of energy which never failed him. The true gauge of the power of words lies in what words can accomplish. Words not backed by deeds never were, and never

can be eloquent. Eloquence is great only when it can do great things, or what is the same, make others do them.

Now it is manifest, that in the whole Jewish, Grecian and Roman world, there was no power, intellectual or moral, which could stand up against Paul ; none, in fact, that ever did withstand him but the power of mere brute force. Physically, of course, the Roman Empire was stronger than Paul and his fellow apostles ; but in every other sense, they were more than a match for the world, as the result proved. And as the chief instrumentality which they used in accomplishing their great work, was public speaking—the preaching of the truth ; so, we must pronounce the public speaking, which had such power to move the world, eloquence of the highest order ; and none the less so, but indeed all the more so, because it was wielded by a Divine power.

There are several incidents recorded of Paul's public speaking which evince his consummate ability and address as an orator. For instance, you remember how, at Lystra, the priest of Mercury was about to offer sacrifice to him as the chief speaker, under the impression that the god of eloquence had come down. That such a man as Felix should be made to tremble on his seat of power, when he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, is another proof of it. And that such a man as Agrippa should be made to confess himself almost persuaded to be a Christian before all the court of Festus, is still another. See, too, with what promptness and graceful majesty, he replied to the rude interruption of the governor. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." You may remember also how at one time he carried his cause triumphantly over the Sanhedrim by taking advantage of their own dissensions, and rebuked the

high priest in his very chair of office, with the bold and terrible retort—"God shall smite thee, thou whited wall : for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to law?" You may remember how at last having won for himself the reputation of "turning the world upside down," which in fact he had done, though not, like the mighty men of this world, with the thunders of any human artillery, or the lightning of any physical sword, he took an appeal from all the petty tribunals, both of Jew and Gentile, and carried up his great cause, the cause of Christianity against the world, to the highest tribunal on earth, the judgment bar of Cæsar, where he tells us, "no man stood with him." No man, learned in the law of nations, ever baffled his adversaries and covered them with confusion more effectually than Paul did by this appeal. And never did an orator have a nobler cause to plead, or occupy a position of higher moral grandeur, than Paul held, when thus appealing, he stood before Nero. What would we not give to have that speech?

We have all, perhaps, admired the lofty bearing with which, in different lands and in different ages, the preachers of the gospel, as if animated by one spirit, have stood up for the defence of truth and right in the presence of the kings and nobles and mighty men of the earth. There is nothing in the history of man more glorious than this. There are no deeds that men have ever done, which have more successfully vindicated the dignity of human nature, and made man worthy of the attention of angels, than these brave deeds of the unarmed preachers of the truth as it is in Jesus. We have read how the corrupt court of France was often made to tremble under the daring appeals and applications of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon. We have read how the trumpet tongue of John Knox, unawed

by royalty and beauty even in tears, failed not to charge home the sins and follies of the Queen of Scots. We have read how George II. of England was awed into silence and admiration, when rebuked for his levity, by Samuel Davies of Virginia, saying to him—"When Jehovah speaks, let the Kings of the earth keep silence." We have read how Wickliffe and Luther, Wishart and Rogers, Bunyan and Baxter, and a cloud of such witnesses for the truth, stood up boldly against the strongholds of prevailing vice and fashion, and were not afraid to beard the lion in his den, when duty required it.

But whence this daring fidelity to the cause of truth? Whence this heroic devotion to principles for which no Grecian or Roman orator ever died? In what school did the preachers of righteousness learn this brave style of eloquence? Why have they been so sublime? The answer is obvious. It lies in the fact, that they have taken Paul and his fellow apostles as their models, and they have only followed in the footsteps of these inspired orators, even as they followed in the footsteps of Christ.

XI.—DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD.

But if such be the eloquence of his ministers and servants, what shall we say of the Master himself? If such distinction belong to the merely human orators of the Bible, as compared with those of other nations, how shall we speak of the Divine preëminence of that eloquent voice, which once shook the earth, and shall yet once more shake both earth and heaven! If any thing more were wanting to complete our picture, to place the seal of triumph and glory upon these inspired orators, and to exalt the eloquence of the pulpit above every other kind of elo-

quence, it is found in the fact that Christ the son of God was a public speaker and a preacher of the gospel.

It would seem at first view hardly lawful to call him an orator : and yet, in the highest sense of the term, he was as truly a human and Divine orator, as he was both God and man. He spoke in public and in private. His converse was with God and with man. His great mediatorial office of prophet made him a public teacher to the world. As an ambassador sent from Heaven, he had a great mission to establish and proclaim by mighty works and mighty words. His ministry of three years was a period of almost daily public speaking. "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." Speech, public, private, unceasing, human speech was one of the grand instruments of his power on the world, one of the essential departments of the work he came to do.

What must have been the soft, beseeching music of that voice, of which it is written, that they "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth :—" "The common people heard him gladly :—" "He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes ;—" "Never man spake as this man ?" What must have been the eloquent Divine power of that voice of wisdom, love and authority, which sometimes put every adversary to silence, and sounded the very depths of the human heart, so as to reveal all it had ever felt or done—that voice, which from the mountain's brow, beneath the tranquil skies, in view of the bright glad waters of the sea of Galilee, breathed forth its words of blessing and salvation to the lost sheep of the house of Israel—that voice whose every accent was in such deep sympathy with human want and woe, that it could speak peace to the troubled soul, joy to the desolate, light for the straying, pardon for the guilty, health for the sick, hope for the despairing,

life for the dying—that voice which had such absolute command over all the elements of nature, that it could say to the raging winds and waters—“Peace, be still;” and there was a calm; or to the dull cold ear of death—“Damsel, arise,” “Lazarus, come forth;” and it was obeyed—that voice, whose possessor was in such sublime communion and harmony with the heavenly world, that thrice did he draw down a response and testimony from God, as if it had been a voice of thunder or of an angel.

Talk we of the eloquence of human tongues? Here is a voice of Divine eloquence, clothing itself in the language of men, but fresh from Heaven, which the living and the dying of every generation have listened to, as they have to no other voice. 'Tis the voice of Jesus, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but God over all and blessed forever. In his very name there is a music and a charm which no other name of men or angels can inspire. In his voice there is an eloquence and a power which can awake the dead—which all that are in their graves shall hear, and when they hear it, shall spring to life again. 'Tis the voice of him who made the world, who “spake and it was done; who commanded, and it stood fast.” The first voice to which these heavens and earth reverberated at the beginning, saying, “Let there be light,” is the same voice that is appointed to wake the dead and close the scenes of time. So that the Bible opens and closes, like the course of time, with the voice of God. Jesus, the great teacher, prophet, priest and king of our salvation, is the first and last to speak on the grand theatre of this material creation—the Alpha and Omega, alike of all human eloquence and all created existence. How profound—how sublime—how solemn his words: “Marvel not at this; the hour cometh, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live.”

We need not dwell upon the peculiar characteristics of our Saviour's public and private discourses. They must be familiar to all. But his discourses stand alone, and unapproachable in the history of literature and of eloquence. No other teacher, not even his inspired Apostles, ever spoke as he did. You will call to mind at once his remarkable parables, of which about thirty are recorded at length, and which, for originality, beauty, and power of truth, have no parallel in human language. They have been the study and the admiration of the world for eighteen centuries. You will think also of his wonderful sermon on the Mount, which at one view embraces all the great essential principles of morality and virtue, as well as all the primary precepts of the gospel. You will remember too all those fearful denunciations of woe and impending judgment which he seems to have uttered against the Pharisees and wicked rulers of Jerusalem, as if every sentence had drawn from him a tear. You will readily call to mind the many occasions on which he, by a few heart-searching words, stripped off all the disguises of his foes and put to silence and confusion those who had laid snares to destroy him, by reporting what he said. And you will not forget those long, affectionate, parting discourses, reported by John, which he delivered to his disciples on the night before his death. If there is pathos—if there is earnestness—if there is sublime truth—if there is the soul of eloquence, to be found in words, you have all in these farewell words, these sacred "memorabilia" of Jesus.

Socrates was a great and wise man for his generation. For a Greek and a heathen, he had made great attainments in practical wisdom. But, living or dying, he uttered no such sentiments of sublimity and truth, as these last sayings of Jesus. There is no such Divine consolation, no such voice of eloquence

to sustain and cheer the soul in its passage through the dark valley and shadow of death. One sentence from the lips of Jesus has more to comfort and inspire, than all the Socratic philosophy of the "Memorabilia." It may be doubted, after all, whether in all points, Socrates lived or died, as he had taught, like a philosopher: but the world has never questioned that Jesus Christ lived, and taught, and died, as never man did—as none but God could do.

XII.—CONCLUSION.

But finally; from the survey now taken of the eloquent oratory of the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New, the conclusion seems fair and legitimate, that this book is entitled to hold the first rank in the annals of human eloquence; that it contains models of thought and expression in almost every department of speech, possessing the highest attractions of taste and genius, as well as of inspiration—models equal, if not superior, to any that mortal ears have ever listened to, or human hearts ever felt.

Now this is no small claim which we are making for the Book of God, when we ascribe to it the highest attractions of eloquence. For there is nothing in all the walks of genius that men more admire than real eloquence: and it is impossible to over-estimate the influence which eloquence has wielded over the destinies of men and nations. The gift of speech is one of the greatest and best of God's gifts to man. The tongue of eloquence is one of the sublimest and most effective of all the endowments of genius.

There is no music this side of the music of the spheres and

the songs of angels, so sweet and entrancing as the music of the human voice. There is no creature that God hath placed on earth so eloquent, so musical, as man ; and there is no eloquence or music which man can make, so sublime and godlike, as that which he makes with his voice. Man hath sought out many inventions to extend his dominion and supplement his power ; but there is no instrument yet invented so attractive, so sublime, so sweet as his voice. What is the inarticulate roar of the cannon, or burst of the bomb-shell, or beat of the drum, or blast of the bugle, or whistle of the steam car, or pealing note of the organ, compared with the thought-laden thunder and meaning-melody of the human voice? What is the rude roar of the monarch of the forest, or the wild scream of the eagle, or the loud neighing of the steed, or the sweetest music of the nightingale, compared with the male or female voice of our species? Nay further ; what is even the deep-toned anthem of the sea, and the earthquake, the cataract, the volcano and the storm? It is louder and stronger ; but is it more eloquent and sublime, than the articulate, intelligent voice of man? Says the apostle, “ there are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.” But there is no voice on earth so significant as man’s. There are voices of music, eloquence, poesy—voices of high and holy significance to the ear of reason and religion—in all the realms of nature ; but it is only when the human voice hath taken them up and given to them a tongue in human speech, that these inarticulate voices of nature become intelligible, eloquent and sublime.

But these, you may say, are the voices of God. In the very same sense is the voice of man the voice of God ; for he is its author. The great intellect—the great orator, with all the

music of his eloquent tongue, is not less the workmanship of God, than is the great mountain or the great sea. A distinguished statesman and orator of our times, Lord Brougham, has remarked that a great mind, on some important occasion and some lofty theme, giving utterance to itself in eloquent speech, is the sublimest spectacle which the world now affords. Who has not felt the force of that remark? If we include, as we ought, in the term eloquence, man's address to God in prayer as well as his address to his fellow-men, it is clear, that eloquent speech is the sublimest act which he can perform, since the age of miracles. In accordance with this idea, we find the inspired Psalmist repeatedly speaking of his tongue or voice as the glory of his physical frame: "Wake up my glory," "I will sing and praise thee with my glory." If it were possible, who now would not give more to hear Paul's speech on Mars Hill, or before the bar of Nero, than to see the Parthenon at Athens, or the Coliseum and Pantheon at Rome in all their glory? Who that has a soul within him, would not go farther to hear Chalmers or Robert Hall preach, than to see London or Edinburgh, Ben Nevis or Loch Lomond? The grandest monument of human art now on earth, is probably St. Peter's at Rome; but who would not pay more for one hearing of Sheridan's speech on the trial of Warren Hastings, than for one vision even of all the glory of St. Peter's? The cataract of Niagara is considered the sublimest single spectacle in all the realms of nature; but where is the man, who, if he had the option of gazing for an hour on that "glorious robe of beauty and of power," or of hearing Patrick Henry, or Henry Clay speak an hour, would not say, let me hear the great man eloquent? Yes, we hold this double truth—that man himself, is, after all, the sublimest of all God's works on

earth, and that eloquence is the sublimest of all the acts of man, provided only he be a true man.

Hence we are not surprised at the prominence which public speaking holds in the Bible, and in the whole economy of God's grace to the world. We do not wonder that God hath ordained by public speech—the preaching of the cross—to accomplish the greatest work that is ever to be done on earth. In the conversion of a sinner to God, through the preaching of the truth—in the conversion of a world to God, by the agency of living, speaking men, the gospel has given to human eloquence at once its noblest mission, and its grandest development.

By all that admiration, then, which we feel for genius and eloquence when employed in the accomplishment of the greatest and noblest ends, we are attracted to the Bible as the book of books. And in all that superiority, which, from the sublimity and importance of their themes, its orators have attained over others, we have an argument that the book is from God. For that its comparatively unfavored orators, in what has been called a rude, unlettered age, and of an unartistic race, should have reached this perfection of beauty and sublimity, and should still hold an acknowledged mastery over all civilized nations, are facts which admit of but one solution—which is, that God himself is the great speaker, and all its other speakers have been his mouth-piece, his authorized oracles and ambassadors.

CHAPTER V.

TYPES OF FEMALE CHARACTER IN THE BIBLE.

Interest of the Subject—General View—Classification—Picture of Eve—Sarah and Rebekah—Character of Deborah—Character of Esther and Ruth—Jezebel and Athaliah—Herodias and her dancing Daughter—Abigail, Hannah, and Martha—The Marys—Concluding Remarks.

I.—INTEREST OF THE SUBJECT.

IN illustration of our main proposition in these pages—the classical attractiveness of the Bible—it is important to present, at least, a specimen of its historical or biographical characters. In nothing perhaps does its superiority over all other books appear more manifest, than in its brief, graphic, inimitable delineations of human character. From first to last, it opens to our view, besides its poets and orators, a magnificent succession of living characters—kings and statesmen, heroes and sages, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, young men and maidens, old men and children. In a field so vast, where volumes might be filled, we can only select a few prominent groups, by way of example. For this purpose, let us take first the Women of the Bible, or, as they may be called in modern phrase, “the Ladies of the olden time.” In order to win from the youth of both sexes a deep and abiding interest in our task at the outset, we would here seek to present, on the foreground of the picture, the loveliest group of all. We would call them to the contem-

plation of a woman in her most ancient record. We would invite them to look first upon that character, which, in an ascending scale, was the last to appear amid the scenes of creation, and which, by being last, seemed to bear the aspect of the most finished production of creative wisdom, and the nearest approximation to Divine perfection, of all that was made. Woman's earliest, noblest record is the Bible ; and upon this fact we would now fix your attention as one of the chief attractions of the book.

You are, doubtless, familiar with the record of her virtues, her sufferings, and her achievements, in other books and on other fields of fame. You have all, perhaps, read the story of the heroic women of the American Revolution, or that of the memorable women of Scotland's covenant ; you have heard the fame of many a noble lady in many a royal court during the age of chivalry and romance ; you have admired the renowned matrons of Grecian and Roman history ; and you have marked, with a peculiar pleasure, the luminous pathway of woman in all those fields of literature, of beneficence, and of Christian missions, which have been opened to her by our modern civilization. But it is not of any of these that we are now to speak. Our present purpose is to ascend the stream of female biography to its fountain-head ; to read a record of higher antiquity and nobler heraldry than any of these could boast ; in short ,to carry you back, and, if you have not already formed the acquaintance, to introduce you to the beautiful, the heroic, the artless, the pure-minded, the queen-like, the oft-inspired women of the Scriptures.

In the portraiture of female character which is presented in the Bible, we behold a galaxy of moral and spiritual beauty, excelling all the ancient world, and still shining out from the

darkness of ages in all its original, undimmed radiance. We gaze upon it with admiration, as we do upon the star-gemmed firmament of the night, which has lost nothing through the lapse of time, but is as fresh and lovely now as when the evening and morning closed the first week of creation. In the women of the Bible we see something of that native beauty which is unindebted to the tricks of art, and which, when "unadorned is adorned the most." In these ladies of the olden time, these honored women of the earth's first golden age, we have those primeval types of womanly beauty and glory, which, like originals from the great masters of painting and sculpture, have stood for the study and admiration of the world. More heroic than the mothers of our revolutionary struggle, more saintly than the high-souled daughters of Scotland's covenant, more queenly than the queens of any royal court, more renowned than all the ladies fair for whom the wars of chivalry were waged, more majestic and sublime in virtue than Lucretia or any matron of Grecian and Roman story, more beautiful and glorious than Rebekah the Jewess in Ivanhoe or any other creation of romance, the women of the Bible, in all that constitutes the peculiar glory of their sex, have stood through ages as the brightest exemplars to mankind. Embosomed on the pages of sacred history, like stars upon the diadem of night, these daughters and sisters of the patriarchs, these wives and mothers of the sons of God, have been shining there, as by heaven's appointment they were intended to shine, for the guidance of the women of every generation to the end of time. What they have been thus far, they are still—the most perfect models by which to form the manners and the moral character of woman.

To the contemplation of these models, your attention is now

invited. Amid the hurry and bustle of this age of excitement, and empty show, and heartless fashion, it may do us good to go back occasionally to the simplicity of nature. We live in an age of wonders. On all hands we hear the cry of new inventions, the boast of improvement, the march of mind, the din of many running to and fro, and knowledge increasing. Almost everybody smatters of science, and almost everything hisses with steam. Everything is in motion, and everybody seems to be striving to verify the couplet—

“Tramp, tramp along the land we go,
Splash, splash across the sea.”

At such a time it may be as delightful as it is profitable, to escape from these scenes of noise and confusion, and take refuge, at least for an hour, in that old world of tranquillity and peace, where, beneath genial skies, and amid rural scenes, the mothers, wives, and daughters of patriarchs and kings, prophets and apostles, dwelt so long to make home happy, and prepare for heaven. Such a retrospect of the past, and such a contemplation of the biography of the highly-favored women of the Bible, may well be considered appropriate here, if we shall succeed at all in commending these pages to the parents and teachers, above all, to the mothers and daughters, of our times. The theme is one which is strictly and emphatically educational, and one, too, which ought to prove instructive to the young, attractive to all.

II.—GENERAL VIEW.

The number of women mentioned in the Bible by name is about eighty, besides some twenty others, whose names are not given, but who are individually described by their social rela-

tions ; such as Pharaoh's daughter, Lot's wife, Peter's wife's mother, the widow of Nain, the woman of Samaria, the witch of Endor, the queen of Sheba, and the elect lady of John's second epistle. We have, therefore, about one hundred in all, whose names or characters, singled out from the general mass, have acquired a distinct personality, and have been rendered immortal on the pages of the sacred volume. Their history, left on record by the infallible pen of inspiration, runs through a period of four thousand years ; from Eve, the first wife and mother of our race, down to that excellent lady to whom the beloved disciple, inditing his second epistle, says : " I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth." Their biography is written with every varying degree of fullness, from a single significant name, like that of Josiah's mother, *Jedidah*, " the amiable, the well-beloved," or that of Job's daughter, *Jemima*, " handsome as the day," up to a description so complete that it gives name to a whole book, as in the case of Ruth and Esther. Their lives, characters, and fortunes, as delineated between these extremes, are beautifully diversified with all that goes to make up the real world—all the lights and shadows of human existence.

There is no scene of prosperity or adversity, no condition of youth or old age, no degree of joy or sorrow, hope or despair, through which some of these women of the Bible have not passed. There is no relationship of life, private or public, domestic, social, or civil, in which woman ever stood or can stand, that they have not held ; whilst some of them occupied peculiar and wonderful positions which no woman will ever fill again on earth. In all the diversified ranks of human society, in all the changing circumstances of wealth and poverty, of grandeur and lowliness, they have stood, from Bathsheba, on the right hand

of Solomon's throne, and Esther, queen of a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, down to the poor widow casting her two mites into the treasury, or Lydia selling her purple, or Dorcas working at her garment, or Magdalene weeping at Jesus's feet.

Whether we contemplate the women of the Old Testament or the New; whether we follow the mother of Moses, secretly launching the frail bark of her babe upon the waters of the Nile, or the mother of Jesus, in the gaze of the multitude, beholding her son and Lord expire on the cross; whether we look upon Miriam as she stands up exultingly with all the band of Israel's daughters on the Red Sea's shore, or see Deborah, the heroic, heaven-inspired prophetess, at the head of the armies of Israel, going forth to battle against the enemies of her country, and returning with songs of victory; whether we view Jephthah's daughter laying down her young and lovely life as a willing sacrifice on the altar of filial duty and patriotism, or behold the women of Galilee and the daughters of Jerusalem, the Marys and the Marthas, as in their silent, unutterable sorrow, they watch the hill of death, and linger around the tomb, and win for their sex the imperishable glory of being "earliest at the sepulchre and latest at the cross"—we must acknowledge that there is no sphere of honor and trust, no post of danger, trial and responsibility, which woman ever filled on earth, higher than those which the women of the Bible have filled.

And further still, in their moral character we behold as great a diversity as in their social condition and their external fortunes. Every virtue, every grace, every glorious moral attribute that can adorn and ennoble the female heart, is illustrated in the lives of some of them; whilst all the depths of dark depravity, to which woman ever stooped on earth, are revealed in others. The good and lovely, however, greatly outnumber the bad. But the female biography of the whole world does

not display more strikingly the extremes of good and evil in moral character, than they are displayed in the women of the Scriptures. Nowhere else, except in the actual world around us, can we find such a field for the study of character, such a life-like picture of the heart in all its workings. What a contrast, for example, have we between vile, haggard vice, as represented in the witch of Endor, and calm, celestial virtue, as represented in Anna, the prophetess, "waiting for the consolation of Israel!" Look at those heaven-daring monsters of cruelty, Athaliah and Jezebel, queens of Judah and Israel, as contrasted with the loving sisters, Mary and Martha of Bethany. Or, behold Naomi and Ruth, in their humble piety and whole-hearted affection, as contrasted with Herodias and her daughter in their proud, vindictive, ferocious guilt!

Now this wide diversity of female character is so exhibited in the Bible, from first to last, as to make us admire and love the virtuous, whilst we abhor and loathe the vicious. And herein is displayed a wonderful peculiarity of all the Scripture biography, both male and female. 'Tis a peculiarity which reveals the skill of a master mind, and the delicate touches of an immaculate hand. 'Tis that conscientious, consistent, ever-watchful, inflexible regard for truth and virtue, which makes us feel that these unparalleled portraits could have been drawn by no less than a hand Divine. On this background of four thousand years, on this biographical canvas, stretching from the Creation to the Advent, embracing the widest possible variety of outline and detail, portraying an almost endless diversity of circumstances and social condition, and comprehending a range of moral character from the extreme of spotless virtue to that of hideous vice, one hundred of the most notable and strongly marked women of antiquity, many of them of different nations

and races, are so presented to our view as to produce invariably upon every mind, whether aged or young, refined or illiterate, inclined to virtue or prone to vice, the same grand moral impression of admiration for the virtuous and disgust for the vicious. On whatever groups of the picture you gaze, whether on its angels of innocence or its monsters of iniquity, or on all the shades of character that lie between, one invariable, salutary lesson, of admiration for the holy and abhorrence for the bad, remains fixed upon the heart forevermore.

You must not expect to find the women of the Bible all angels. If they had been, they would not have been the best models for us. We needed the shadows, as well as the lights, to form a perfect picture. But the thing we most needed was the pencil of inspiration ; so to blend the lights with the shadows, as to produce the right moral effect, and thus to make the mothers, wives, and daughters of the earth's earliest history, the authorized models for moulding the moral character of woman in every age and every land to the end of time. Nor, again, must you expect to find even those women of the Bible, who may pass for angelic, altogether or at all times such. They are holy, and good, and lovely : but they are not sinless. They are still of the earth, belonging to human nature, though walking with God. And, in this respect, they differ from those ideal, dream-like creatures of our modern poetry and fiction, whose idolized perfection consists in its infinite unlikeness to anything real on earth. Indeed, it is as much by the faithfully recorded faults and foibles, infirmities and defects of these scriptural characters, as by their bright, angelic virtues, that the spirit of inspiration intended the daughters of all subsequent ages to be taught. For just as the extremes of virtue and vice are represented on the great picture, in the character of different persons, so

also all the intermediate degrees of good and evil, in lighter or darker shades, are found mingling sometimes in the same person, and that person as Rahab, or Magdalene, at last a saint of God.

Now, if the highly-favored ladies of our times should be at all disposed to think disparagingly of the woman of the Bible, and to ask why she was not more perfect, more accomplished, more refined, let them bear in mind that the woman of the Bible, was the pioneer of the world's civilization ; that she had but few examples, if any, to study ; that she had to go before as an original, and set the fashion for those who came afterwards ; that she had not, what all have now, an inspired volume, containing one hundred Divinely drawn characters, to teach her what woman ought to be or ought not to be. It is by her experience, and through the lessons derived from her example, that the female world is such as we find it now. She has thus become the riches of the world, and by her instrumentality as a predecessor, a pioneer and a model, woman has since attained that superiority of position, of influence, of mental and moral culture, which now distinguishes her in every civilized Christian land. Do not forget, then, that if the woman of the Bible had not been just what she was thousands of years ago, our much admired female friend, who reads these pages, would be very far from being the accomplished lady she now is. The proof of the fact is seen in that contrast, which, for eighteen centuries, has existed between the intellectual, social, and moral condition of woman in Christian lands, and her condition in countries where no Bible has been known.

III.—CLASSIFICATION.

This long gallery of strikingly diversified female portraits, of which, thus far, we have been taking only a distant panoramic view, may now be approached for a closer inspection, and will be found arranged under the four following distinct divisions or groups :

The first class is composed of all those whose characters, so far as they have come down to us, are proverbial for wickedness or folly ; whose talents and influence, while they lived, were wholly perverted to evil ; and whose fearful examples, held forth in the clear light of Scripture, still speak to warn the youth of both sexes, and of every generation, from the paths of transgression. In this dark group stand the infamous wife of Potiphar, the sorceress of Endor, the blood-thirsty, incestuous Herodias, with her dancing daughter, and the notorious queens, Athaliah and Jezebel, whose whole royal authority was employed in subverting the worship of Jehovah. Here also, we find, though partly concealed from view by an overhanging veil of mystery, such characters as the memorable but nameless wife of Lot, the ill fated wife of the Levite mentioned in the book of Judges, the treacherous Delilah, and the hypocritical Sapphira, wife of Ananias.

The second division embraces all those, who, once proverbial for their unholy lives, were converted, and so changed by the grace of God, that they afterwards became as illustrious for faith and piety, as they had formerly been noted for their depravity. To this group of redeemed ones—brands plucked from the burning—belongs Rahab of Jericho, who is one of the only two women mentioned in Paul's long list of faith's wor-

thies. Here also, we behold, among others, the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene, the damsel of Philippi, and that poor condemned outcast from the mercy of man to whom Jesus said, "Go and sin no more." These remarkable trophies of saving grace are, doubtless, set forth in the gallery of Scripture to exemplify the great truth, that no life can be so wretched and hopeless, no character so lost to virtue and sunk so low in sin, as to be beyond the pale of Christian sympathy, or the power of divine grace.

The third class is the largest of all. It is made up of all those whose lives flow mingling to the end with manifold currents of good and evil ; now the one and now the other predominating, and giving color to the stream. It is composed of mixed characters, in which nature seems to struggle with grace for the mastery, and in which it is difficult at times to say whether sin or grace most abounds. There is a constant alternation of light and shadow. We see images of beauty amid broken fragments, treasures of heaven in earthen vessels, jewels of immortality in caskets of clay. We see the bright light of the sun softened down and attenuated to a slender shadowy outline, and reflected from the dark edge of the moon—the graces of faith, hope and charity, shining thus through manifold obstacles of human infirmity and sinful passion. To this group, which comes the nearer down to our own experience of life only to give us the greater encouragement for rising above earth and earthly scenes, may be assigned Eve, first in virtue and first in transgression ; Sarah the devoted but impatient wife ; Hagar the ungrateful maid ; Rebekah, the partial mother ; Miriam, the true hearted, but ambitious sister of Moses ; Martha, the energetic, faithful, but care-burdened friend of Jesus : and Salome, the aspiring mother of Zebedee's children.

The fourth class consists of those in whom the world has found no blemish—all light without a shadow, all beauty without a fault. Their characters appear before us in unsullied purity—not because they had attained perfection, for, like all others, they were sinful by nature, and only partially sanctified by grace—but because the pen of inspiration has, purposely, given us their virtues, and left their sins and imperfections unrecorded. In this radiant group may be seen Deborah, the sublime, heroic prophetess and mother in Israel; Hannah, the devout mother of Samuel; Abigail, the prudent wife of David; Ruth, the lovely Moabitess; and Esther, queen of queens, in the Old Testament; and, in the New, Anna, the prophetess; Priscilla, the Jewess; Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist; Mary, of Bethany; Mary, the mother of our Lord; Eunice and Lois, the mother and grandmother of Timothy, and that elect lady, who, of all the hundred, stands nearest to our own times. It was important that we should have some specimens of woman at her best estate—pictures of the genial, sunny-side of human nature—and these stand forth as the finest models which human nature, sanctified by grace, has yet realized in its advance towards perfection. These portraits stand out upon the canvas, painted with “colors dipped in heaven,” to give the world assurance of what lovely woman may become when most adorned by grace, and of what she will become in a world where there is no sin. These are like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

As face answereth unto face in water, and the heart of man to man, as the dark mountains of the shore and the bright skies over head are alike mirrored upon the smooth and glassy surface of the lake, even so may every woman find her own exact image here reflected back, with every form and feature,

every line of beauty or deformity, from some one of the hundred. Here may she see herself in the truest of all mirrors, drawn to the life by an infallible pencil, daguerreotyped by the clear sun-light of heaven. And thus may she learn how to overcome or avoid the imperfections of nature, and to adorn herself with every attraction of grace, and glory, and divinity. Women of every rank in society, every grade of intellect, every sphere of fortune, and every stamp of character, may here find a likeness and a counterpart, ranging from the wealthy Shunamite, or the wise woman of Tekoa, or Huldah in the college, or the queen of the South, down to the poor widow of Sarepta with her pot of oil, and the little maid of Israel, captive in a strange land. In these tranquil depths of antiquity, in these pure and crystal waters of inspired truth, more than in all the classic fountains of Greece and Rome—more, too, than in all the streams of modern poetry and fiction—may our much-loved daughters behold the true outlines of celestial virtue and beauty, reflected, as from the bosom of a mountain-lake, spread out beneath o'er-arching skies, and environed by hills and banks of green. Here, on the one side, in these bright images of grace and loveliness, reflected from the heavens above, they may discern those lineaments of character, which, if imitated, shall make them scarcely less than angels. And there, on the other, in those darker groups, reflected from the rugged rocks on the shore, may they trace the lines of transgression, which need only to be followed to render them little better than fiends or arch-angels fallen. And thus, from a whole survey, both of the evil and the good, of things which are lovely and things which are unutterable, shall they come away, as from a vision into the unseen world, with the grand lesson upon their hearts, that, "the character of woman, like the snow, is the fairest thing on

earth when fair, and the foulest when foul and mingled with the mire."

IV.—PICTURE OF EVE.

But, after this nasty, bird's-eye view of the picture in its several groups, let us now approach a little nearer, and take a more particular survey of some of the individual characters that stand forth most prominently on the scene. In so wide a field, where every object is full of interest, but where time will not permit us to gaze on all, nor linger long on any, we shall feel at liberty to select those points which please us most. As we pass along this crowded gallery of Scripture, enriched by the contributions of so many centuries, let us single out, for a minuter view, those characters in the several groups, which have attained the greatest celebrity, either by the prominence of their stations, the brightness of their talents, or the loveliness of their virtues.

Next to the virgin mother of our Saviour—and, in some respects, even before her—the most notable and gifted woman of the Bible was Eve, daughter of God, wife of Adam, mother of mankind, and queen of the new-created world. Talk we of high nobility, and royal blood, and illustrious descent? Here is one from whom all the royal lines of earth have sprung—a woman crowned with glory by the birth-right of an earlier origin, and invested with sovereignty by the imposition of a mightier hand than any other could ever boast. Talk we of wisdom, and knowledge, and genius? Here is one whose clear intellect, undimmed by folly, unsullied by a sin, and unindebted to the toils of pupilage, was the direct workmanship of Him who poured intelligence into the mind of angel and archangel,

cherubim and seraphim. Talk we of happiness and virtue? Here is one, who, alone of women, tasted that blessedness which springs from a state of absolute perfection ; whose soul, created in the image of the righteous and holy God, was the seat of every human perfection, and whose person was the centre of attraction to everything that dwelt in Eden. Talk we of beauty? Here is one, with the smile of heaven in her eye, the dew of youth on her cheek, and the sun-light of immortality on her brow ; whose intellectual and moral beauty of the soul, fit companion for such a dwelling-place, shone forth in every gesture and movement of that fearfully and wonderfully-made body which was the last and highest material production of creative power.

The artists of every generation, vying with each other to make the canvas speak or marble breathe, and, in their deepest meditations, calling up every image of beauty from the traditions of antiquity, the studies of the great masters, the walks of nature, and the realms of imagination, when they would give the world their *beau ideal* of perfection in one finished model, have essayed their utmost skill, and reached the *chef-d'œuvre* of the pencil and the chisel, as they have reproduced Eve in Paradise. The human mind can go no farther in its conception of the beautiful, than when it pictures to itself the character and person of Eve on the morning of her creation. Blest with the companionship of Adam and the favor of God, enjoying the willing homage of all animated nature, and sovereignty over all the creatures of God, possessing a heart in harmony with all the works of God, and with God himself, she was beautiful herself, and she saw beauty in everything around her. She tasted the cup of perfect, unalloyed felicity, and she diffused joy through all that Paradise over which both God and man had delighted to crown her queen.

The spirit of poesy, too, in its sublimest song, has vied with painting and sculpture in bodying forth its highest conception of the beautiful ; and, in the Eve of Milton, we have one of the noblest contributions that human genius ever laid upon the altar of the Bible. As a commentary on the marriage relation, instituted in Eden when God pronounced the "twain one flesh," as a picture of perfect conjugal affection and domestic bliss, as the utterance of a heart alive to nature and in deepest sympathy with all that was beautiful in the universe, what can exceed these words of Eve's address to Adam ?

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet
 With charm of earliest birds ; pleasant the sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 Glistering with dew ; fragrant the fertile earth,
 After soft showers, and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful evening mild ; then silent night,
 With this, her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
 And these, the gems of heaven, her starry train ;
 But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,
 Glistering with dew, nor fragrance after showers,
 Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,
 With this, her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
 Nor glittering starlight, without thee is sweet."

But alas ! how soon was this scene of joy and beauty changed to woe and death, and Eden lost in the waste wilderness ! How suddenly did this sun of glory go down while it was yet day ! How was the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed, and the crown fallen from the head ! Through the temptation of the Prince of Darkness this bright and happy one,

who had been created only a little lower than the angels, sinned against God and brought death into the world with all our woe. She, the first woman, wife and mother of our race, who, while sinless, had stood as a model of immaculate perfection and glory, now stands as the most memorable example on the scroll of time to teach her daughters that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God.

V.—SARAH AND REBEKAH.

After Eve, the next most remarkable woman of the Old Testament—who, indeed, is oftener referred to in the New than any other—is Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and mother of Isaac. The sacred historian represents her as a woman of exceeding beauty. “Behold,” says her husband, “thou art fair to look upon,” and, wherever she went, she attracted the attention of the people and rulers of the land as one that was “very fair.” So great was the admiration which she won, even from kings and princes, that, on more than one occasion, Abraham thought his life endangered by her beauty, and endeavored to conceal the wife in the sister.

The natural beauty of form and feature, like the intellectual and moral beauty of the soul, is the gift of God, and is no more to be underrated or despised than other good gifts. Of course, the mere material beauty of the outward form cannot be compared, in value, with this higher spiritual beauty of the character. But, as evincing the handiwork of the infinitely wise God, everything beautiful has a claim to be admired and loved. It is just as proper to admire and to prize beauty of person in woman, as the beauty of the rose and the rainbow, the flowing

river and the waving grain, the blue mountain and the bending sky. God has not made the human form so fair, and implanted within us an appreciative sense of the beautiful, and then forbidden us to admire what is lovely. True ; female beauty is a frail, fading flower. And so is the beauty of the rose, and the rainbow, and the summer landscape. True, also, it is a dangerous gift. And so are the gifts of intellect and education. Talents, angel-bright, may be perverted and abused not less than material beauty ; and history will show that man has perverted his strong arm and his iron will to bad purposes just as often as woman has abused that influence which springs from personal beauty.

But, in the case of Sarah, outward personal beauty was found in happy combination with the nobler spiritual beauty of a lofty mind and a virtuous character. Celebrated and admired in that age for her unusual share of natural gifts and graces, she has become still more distinguished through all succeeding ages as an example of deep womanly affections—her faith in God, her conjugal fidelity, her maternal tenderness, and her self-sacrificing devotion to her husband. By the one she was an object of attraction to her contemporaries ; by the other she has become an object of admiration to all who have come after her.

And though her faith did sometimes stagger at the long delay of the promises, though her generous, devoted, high-toned spirit was sometimes ruffled and over-mastered by ingratitude and disobedience, yet in this she is but an illustration of a fact which has occurred a thousand times, that the greatest characters may bend under the weight of the petty annoyances of daily life, after standing erect under the pressure of all the storms and battles of great occasions. She could not bear the inso-

lence of the ungrateful bondmaid and her mocking son, although she was equal to the greatest trials which any woman could be called to endure—even the voluntary surrender of her husband, in order to accomplish the Divine promises, and then the strange sacrifice of the very son of those promises. Adequate, as she was, to all that a wife and mother could be called to do, or suffer on a large scale, she failed most signally in the ordinary duties of a mistress.

The name of Sarah, associated as it is with the father of the faithful, and the heir of all the promises, notwithstanding her errors and infirmities, stands preëminent among women in that “cloud of witnesses,” whose acts of faith are recounted by the apostle Paul to the Hebrews, with the high eulogium, That of them the world was not worthy. To the character of Sarah the apostle Peter also makes honorable allusion, in exhorting the wives and daughters of the church to the cultivation of all the womanly Christian graces.

“Let not your adorning be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is, in the sight of God, of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women, also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord ; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement.”

Now we are sometimes afraid, and with no little amazement, that many of our fair country-women have quite forgotten this exhortation. In these days of outward adorning and elegant accomplishments, of many schools, and many books of new cos-

tumes and woman's rights, of social reforms and conventions to change the ordinances of God, we very much fear that many of our fine ladies would think it no honor to be called the daughters of Sarah. Of what authority can either Paul or Sarah be to those, whose highest conception of the coming millennium seems to be, that it will be a time, now very near, when all parents shall be in subjection to their children, and all husbands to their wives? In such halcyon days, "of bliss surpassing fable," when juvenility shall reign without a rival, and the world have its second boyhood and girlhood, it may be questioned whether your modern fashionable lady, deeply read in novels, deeply learned in etiquette, deeply dyed in social philosophy, would not wholly repudiate the gentility and ladyship of Sarah and the other women of the olden time who communed with God, held converse with the angels, and had their daily walk with the nobles of the earth.

But to proceed. One of the most interesting and lovely characters amongst all these ladies of the olden time is that of Rebekah, the youthful bride, the matronly wife, the aged companion of Isaac. Like Sarah, she had her faults, but they are lost in the superior lustre of her virtues. It will suffice, at present, to refer to a single passage in her history. 'Tis one of interest to all—of especial interest to all young gentlemen and ladies who may need counsel touching one of the most important transactions of life. It is her youthful marriage with Isaac, the man of her choice, and the man too of her parents' choice. In the example of Isaac and Rebekah—one of the best, indeed, in all the Bible as it regards married life—we find this sacred institution entered upon, and observed through a long life, precisely as God ordained it in Eden, and as Jesus Christ re-ordained it in the New Testament when he said. "For this cause shall a

man forsake his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

The times are changed, and the customs of society changed, but this first detailed account of marriage is not without its interest and instruction for the youth of our day. If such a mission," says Dr. Kitto, speaking of Abraham's servant, "were at all possible under our own system of manners, it would certainly not be among the girls gathered round the village pump that the messenger would expect to find a match, in all respects suitable, for the son of his wealthy and well-born master. But in that age, when, as now in the same countries, the young females of the most honorable families discharge the commonest domestic offices, and to whom the fetching of water from the well outside the town was a service in which peculiar pleasure was taken, from its enabling them to meet their companions, the servant knew that the young females whom he might shortly expect to see at that place, must include the very class from which his choice was to be made."

Now, you may be somewhat acquainted with the writings of classical antiquity ; you may be more or less familiar with the pages of our modern poetry and fiction ; you may have read much of history, biography, and the drama ; but it may be safely affirmed, that in all your reading, whether ancient or modern, sacred or profane, you cannot find anything of equal compass on the subject of marriage, so interesting, so instructive, and so beautiful, as that long twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis which tells us all we need to know about the wedding of Isaac and Rebekah. If you will read it carefully again you may notice four circumstances that render it, notwithstanding its antiquity, a manual of instruction to every young man and woman, in choosing a companion for life, as much better as it

is shorter than Hannah More's "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," or Goldsmith's play "She Stoops to Conquer," or any other un-inspired production.

First, it was a marriage, literally and truly, in accordance with the will of the Lord. This was regarded as an essential point alike by the young people and their parents on both sides. Every step, from the beginning to its consummation, by all the parties engaged in it, even to the servant who went for Rebekah, was taken in reliance upon Divine Providence, and with prayer for the blessing of heaven upon the nuptials. The whole matter had been committed to the Lord's direction, as every marriage ought to be.

Secondly, it was free, cordial and unrestrained on Rebekah's part as well as on the part of Isaac, and on the part of their parents. The choice of her own heart was consulted and respected as the ultimate authority. There was no compulsion by parental dictation. The parents decided nothing, and gave the messenger no answer till her own decision had been made. "Wilt thou go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." Prompt, courageous and beautiful reply! But had she said "No," there the matter would have ended. They would not have compelled her to go. Her negative would have stopped all further proceedings.

Thirdly, it was no wayward, foolish, and ungrateful runaway match. Rebekah decided for herself, but decided in accordance with the wishes of her parents. Had they said "No," she would not have gone. Their negative, like hers, would have stopped all farther proceedings. She would not have married at all rather than marry in opposition to the wishes of her parents. Thus to the parent and the child, belonged a rightful veto as God and nature intended it should belong in every case of marriage. Do you ask, What is a young lady to do, when her pa-

rents oppose her marriage in a particular case. We answer, Do nothing ; but remain as she is. Do not marry at all rather than marry under such circumstances. There had better be no marriage, while the world stands, than marriage in defiance of parental authority. It is a sinful breach of the great law of nature and of heaven, when a parent compels his daughter to marry against her own heart's choice ; and it is no less so for a daughter to marry in defiance of the will of her parents. The young woman, who is capable of bringing upon the once happy home of her childhood, all that desolation which is implied in an elopement, and of inflicting such unmitigated cruelty upon the mother to whom she owes the highest of all earthly obligations, is, to say the very least, unfit herself to be a wife and mother ; and the world would be no loser if she should never marry. We speak with emphasis upon the subject ; because anything, which, in the name of marriage, thus tramples upon the sacredness of home, and the rights of parents, however it may be tolerated in our fashionable society, we can only regard as an evil and an outrage, as abhorrent to nature as it is contrary to the law of God.

Fourthly, the courtship of Isaac and Rebekah, unlike many in our day, was one of perfect candor, of straight-forward, business-like simplicity, and of admirable delicacy and fair-dealing on all sides. There was no double-dealing, no coquetry, no unwomanly vacillation ; no unmanly breach of contract, no saying one thing and meaning another ; no female diplomacy, no modern manoeuvring. The young and lovely Rebekah shines forth as the model of artless innocence, of open-hearted truthfulness, of womanly decision, of lady-like delicacy, and of devoted piety and trust in God. And as for Isaac, walking afield at eventide, to meditate, holding quiet communion with nature, and lifting up his eyes, at last, to behold the camels

coming, and Rebekah with them, how can we think otherwise of him than as the most blessed and happy man of his day ? *

From a review of the whole case, we think there is much to admire in this ancient marriage ; and there are many lessons which our much-loved daughters might learn from its natural simplicity and beauty. There is more real refinement, and more of the true dignity and glory of woman in such a marriage as Rebekah's than in all the clandestine elopements, and romantic adventures, and sentimental wooings by moonshine, and mercenary bargainings for wealth and ambition, that our novelists have ever depicted, or our modern belles ever sighed for.

VI.—CHARACTER OF DEBORAH.

But let us turn now to a type of female character altogether different from any we have yet contemplated ; let us turn from the private to the public—from the tranquil scenes of domestic life to the stirring incidents of the political. It is upon an inspired prophetess of the Lord that we are now to look.

Seven of the hundred women of the Bible bear the title of prophetess, not to mention the four virgin daughters of Philip, the Evangelist. These are, the good Anna, of the gospel history, and the wicked, self-styled prophetess, Jezebel, of the Book of Revelation ; and, in the Old Testament, the wife of Isaiah, the Noadiah of Nehemiah, Huldah of Jerusalem, Miriam the sister of Moses, and Deborah. Let us consider, for a moment, the last of these, as being the most remarkable and the most gifted of the prophetic group, and possessing, too, as much of the heroic as the prophetic spirit.

She was a wife and a mother in Israel ; and, no doubt, faith-

fully discharged all those duties which constitute the glory of woman. But, from the brief record of her public acts and the success of her daring achievements, as well as from her sublime poetry, it is manifest that she possessed, in rare combination, many of the highest intellectual and moral endowments. She united, at once, the genius of the poet, the administrative ability of the civil ruler, the wisdom of the judge, the courage of the military leader, and that high-toned patriotic enthusiasm, which made her the deliverer of her country when there was not a man, in all the twelve tribes, for the space of twenty years, who had dared to strike a blow for its deliverance. Raised up and inspired of God for the occasion, called first to be the civil head of the nation because there was no one else competent to the place, and then, most reluctantly, called to take the field at the head of its armies, when all hearts were quailing for fear, though herself undaunted before the multitudinous array of Israel's proud invaders, this wife of Lapidoth and mother in Israel went forth from her quiet home beneath the palm-tree; and, infusing her own indomitable spirit into Barak and her countrymen, turned not back till every foeman had been driven from the land, and in her sublime words, "the stars in their courses had fought against Sisera." Israel triumphed gloriously. But it was a greater triumph for woman than for Israel. From the men of that generation, and for her sex, she won a triumph which should stand as a memorial in all generations to come. If there were no other proof on record of the strength of female character, and the capacity of female intellect, this signal victory and triumphal song of Deborah would remain as a perpetual monument to the intellectual and spiritual glory of woman.

Many subsequent triumphs have been won by woman in almost every field of human action. But to Deborah belongs

the distinction of being the pioneer of her sex in this department of greatness. The true sphere of woman, in which Providence intended, as a general rule, that she should win her highest glory, is not the battle-field, nor the cabinet of state, nor the hall of legislation, nor, indeed, the throne of empire. But there are examples enough in history, like that of Deborah, to show that when occasion calls for it—which, indeed, is not often—woman is capable of the very greatest achievements in every sphere of human enterprise, in every field of intellectual and moral effort. The commanding influence of Deborah, the poetic genius of Sappho, the martial spirit of Zenobia, the administrative ability of Queen Elizabeth, the statesman-like character of Margaret of Denmark, the heroic courage and achievements of Joan of Arc, Flora Macdonald, and Grace Darling, the versatile talents of Madame De Stael, the classical learning of Madame Dacier, the scientific attainments of Mrs. Somerville, not to mention a hundred others, stand not only as an evidence of what woman has done in all the walks which man has claimed as his own, but as an argument for what she could do, if all those walks were as open to her as they are to him. Oh, yes ; there can be no doubt at all that woman has the ability, or, what amounts to the same, could very soon acquire the ability, to manage the world, and manage it very well too, if man would resign the sceptre and change places with her. But then there can be no doubt at all, that she would be the greatest loser by the change ; nay, she would lose infinitely more than she or the world could gain by such a bargain.

Now, it adds a peculiar lustre to the character of Deborah, that she did not seek to sink the woman in the warrior. She could play the heroine on a grand scale, when occasion called for it, in the deliverance of her country. But she undertook it

reluctantly, feeling that it was not her congenial element. The victory she won was worthy of the cause she had espoused. Her triumphal hymn was worthy of the victory. And all were worthy of such a woman, wife, and mother. With equal truth and beauty it has been remarked of her, by the accomplished author of "Woman's Record," that, "she did not assume for herself the title of *Judge*, *Heroine*, or *Prophetess*, though she was all these, but she chose the tender name of *Mother* as the highest style of woman ; and described the utter misery of her people as arousing her to assume the high station of a patriot and leader. It was not ambition, but love, that stirred her noble spirit, and nerved her for the duties of government. She is a remarkable exemplification of the spiritual influence woman has wielded for the benefit of humanity when the energies of man seemed entirely overcome."

Her song of victory, which fills up the fifth chapter of the Book of Judges, is one of the earliest as it is one of the sublimest poems in the world. It breathes, in every line, with patriotic ardor, with lofty enthusiasm, with heroic courage, with thanksgiving to God, all poured forth from a heart glowing with poetic beauty, and swelling with the afflatus of prophetic inspiration. Nobly and truly has it been characterized by a late writer in the following words : "The battle is over ; and now comes the great song of praise and triumph—one of the sublimest pages of poetry within the compass of the Scriptures. It is the only war-song in existence that has the Divine mingled with the human, the very deepest and sweetest spirit of grateful piety with the loftiest temper of patriotism and national enthusiasm. Its sublime apostrophes, its bursts of feeling, its rapid and startling changes of thought, its lightning-like descriptions, its comprehensive historic allusions, its questionings, its solemn

adjurations, its grandeur of faith in God, and gratitude to him, all make it one of the most extraordinary compositions in the Bible. If we should consider it an effort of human genius, it would be unrivalled ; there is nothing to be compared with it in the world of literature."

VII.—ESTHER AND RUTH.

But, from the heroic and warlike, turn now and look upon quite a different picture. Look at Esther in her majesty—after Eve the most queenly woman of all the hundred women of the Bible—once Hadassah, the poor orphan girl of the Jewish captivity, now the successor of Vashti, queen of an empire extending from India to Ethiopia. When did imagination ever dream of a greater and stranger change of fortune than hers ; from the orphan to the queen, from the prisoner of the captivity to the mistress of the palace, from the poor exile to the throne of the greatest empire in the world ? She was beautiful ; and that had been the stepping stone to her exaltation. But her personal beauty was the very least of her charms. There was a higher spiritual beauty, a strength of character, which was to all her outward graces, more, even, than the fine-wrought texture is to the polish of the marble. Behold her, at the zenith of her power, holding fast her religion in the midst of all the blandishments and luxuries of an oriental court, fasting and praying for her down-trodden countrymen. See her after three days and nights of anxious communion with her God, out of the love she bears her kindred and the institutions of her fathers, making up her mind to the great issue ; and then, with a decision and self-sacrifice worthy of a martyr venturing her

life, her all, for the good of her people, with the memorable answer, "If I perish, I perish."

There was decision of character for you. There was courage of the highest order. There was the sublimity of true moral greatness, worthy of the Jewess and worthy of the woman. There, beneath that form of unusual loveliness, dwelt a soul of extraordinary attributes—a spirit of patriotism and religious principle that could look danger and death in the face, and calmly risk all it had on earth for the common good of the nation. But the victim was not needed. The intention was accepted for the deed. She had evinced a heroic confidence in God worthy of a daughter of Abraham; and, by it, she saved the seed of Abraham from extermination. We know not a finer specimen of female biography, nor a loftier example of piety holding fast its profession through all temptation, nor a more delightful illustration of the special, over-ruling Providence of God, than is exhibited in the life and fortunes of this beautiful orphan girl, Hadassah; this majestic, self-sacrificing Queen Esther. Risking all, willing to lose all for others, she gained all, both for others and herself.

Let us leave, for a moment, the palaces of the great and the noble, whilst we turn back to look upon a lowly scene of domestic, rural life. And what picture of youthful piety and love is this that stands so invitingly before us now? 'Tis Ruth, the native of a heathen land, the daughter of an idolatrous race, now converted to the faith of Israel. 'Tis Ruth, cleaving to Naomi with a filial and a religious devotion, which says: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be

buried ; the Lord do so to me, if aught but death part thee and me." 'Tis the lovely and virtuous Ruth, gleaning in the harvest-fields of Bethlehem, becoming the lawful wife of Boaz, and ere long a mother in Israel—a mother of that royal race from which should spring the Saviour of the world, himself to be born in that very Bethlehem where Ruth followed the reapers, and to be born of a damsel as humble as herself.

In the beautiful and instructive story of Ruth, her choice to go with Naomi is, perhaps, the most interesting passage. It was evidently the turning point in the destiny of the young and widowed Moabitess. It exhibits her feelings in deciding an alternative, on which depended all her fortunes for this world, and, it may be, her soul's salvation in the world to come. It represents her in the act of meeting and settling the greatest issue of her life—the question, whether she would stay at home and live on with her kindred in idolatry, or give up all for the people and the service of the only living and true God.

She chose the latter. We know not how long and painful the struggle may have been which brought her to that decision. We only know her choice as the opposite of her sister-in-law's ; and there was no motive short of religion adequate to such a choice. Certainly there was nothing in the external fortunes of Naomi to captivate her heart. Her language, however, is more than that of mere human friendship. It reveals the intense energy and decision of a soul, voluntarily relinquishing all the ties of country and kindred, to choose a portion in the God of Israel and an humble lot among his people. To all the difficulties and hardships suggested by Naomi, she replied with the resolute devotion and ardor of one whose heart was fixed, "Entreat me not to leave thee." All the considerations of personal interest and all the prospects of wordly good were

against the choice she made. These had already prevailed with Orpah to decide the other way. Ruth's language shows that with her the main element and motive of the choice was religion. She decided to go with Naomi to a strange land, rather than return to her mother's house in her own land, because Naomi's people were God's people, and Naomi's God the true God.

It was a noble choice, most touchingly expressed, and most faithfully carried out. Most cheerfully she encountered all the hardships of a foreign land and all the privations of extreme poverty for the sake of the true religion. And she did not lose her reward.

She verified thus early the saying, which was long afterwards written, "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

As she toiled there in the fields of Boaz for her daily bread, an unknown stranger among the reapers, how far from any of her youthful imaginings and day-dreams of the future, must have been the thought, that the blood which then coursed through her veins, and mantled on her cheek, would descend and flow through many of the most renowned personages of the world's history—through David and Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, Mary and Jesus. Her history, wonderful in the lowliness of its beginning, and wonderful in the grandeur of its termination in the great Messiah, is, indeed, a striking illustration of the fact that truth is often stranger and more beautiful than fiction. "Her example," says Mrs. Hale, "shows what woman can do, if she is true to the best impulses of her nature, and faithfully works in her mission, and waits the appointed time." Her life, like that of Esther, so humble in its origin and so illustrious in its results, is a lesson to teach us how,

in the Providence of God, great effects flow from little causes.

Her exaltation may call to mind many similar, though less remarkable cases, in modern history. Take one example. Early in the seventeenth century, a poor English girl went up from the country to London to work her way through the world as a servant. By industry, economy, and an early marriage, she was soon placed above want. Her first husband dying, she then married Edward Hyde, a young lawyer, who became Earl of Clarendon, and Lord High Chancellor of the State. Her daughter married the Duke of York, who became James II. of England; and her two grand-daughters, Mary and Anne, became, successively, queens of Great Britain—two, indeed, of the best of all the English sovereigns. And thus was she, like Ruth and Esther, raised up to become a fountain-head of influence, which should be extended over one of the greatest kingdoms of the earth and perpetuated to the end of time.

The Bible does not tell us that Ruth was fair. Not a word is said about her personal appearance. And yet there is something in the whole narrative which seems naturally to suggest the idea that she was beautiful. Every reader gets that impression, instinctively, unconsciously; he cannot tell why, or from what. Everything that has been uttered about her, every picture that has been drawn, seems to take that point for granted. The beauty of her character seems to throw its soft, sunny reflection over her whole person. She is, to every imagination, a poetic image—an impersonation of the beautiful not less than a historic character. We love to think of her in that light, as we do of Eve, and the very silence of the Bible seems to favor the illusion. As we fancy how she looked in the early dawn, threading her way with elastic steps through the ripeu-

ing wheat-fields of Boaz, we think of her as one who might have prompted the lines of Scott :

“Ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A nymph, a naiad, or a grace
Of finer form or lovelier face.”

Ruth is, indeed, in some respects, the gem of the whole gallery of Scripture portraits. And, as we read her beautiful poetic story, we almost wonder that her great-grandson, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, did not sometimes tune his harp to weave a chaplet of song around the name and memory of such a mother. But, for aught we know, he did. Amongst the many tributes which the modern muse has paid to her loveliness and virtue, we may select, as an appropriate close for our brief sketch, the following lines from Hood, which, though somewhat fanciful, are certainly very beautiful :

“She stood breast high amid the corn,
Clasped by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweet-heart of the sun,
Who many a golden kiss had won.
On her cheeks an autumn blush
Deeply ripened—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.
Round her eyes her tresses fell—
Which were blackest none could tell;
But long lashes veiled a light,
That had else been all too bright.
And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;
There she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks.

Sure, I said, heaven did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean;
Lay thy sheaf adown and come
Share my harvest and my home."

VIII.—JEZEBEL AND ATHALIAH.

By way of contrast, let us turn, for a moment, from these virtuous and holy women, whose names distinguish two of the most beautiful books of Scripture, to gaze upon two others of a totally different character. In Jezebel and Athaliah, the mother and daughter, one the queen of Israel and the other of Judah, one the wife and the other the daughter of Ahab, we behold a double incarnation of wickedness. Companions alike in their heathen idolatry, in their inordinate ambition, in their unrelenting cruelty and blood-thirstiness, in their successful usurpation of royal authority, and in their mad rebellion against Jehovah, they were associates in the awful doom, which, at last, overtook them. The crimes of Athaliah, in the destruction of her grandchildren, were even more aggravated than those of Jezebel. But to Jezebel, as the mother, belongs the greater share of the responsibility and the guilt. And accordingly, her name, like that of Judas and of Cain, has descended to all generations as a proverb and term of reproach. The vocabulary of the world cannot pronounce a more disgraceful stigma on a woman than to call her Jezebel. No child is ever named for Jezebel.

It is a mournful but significant fact, that the darkest, bloodiest period, in the whole history of the Jewish nation, is that in which these two women of iron, seizing the reins of power, exercised absolute dominion over both the court and the

people of Israel and Judah. The one, even while the wife of Ahab, by her superior talents and her iron will, was virtually sole sovereign of Israel. The other, the widow of Jehoram, with a heart of adamant, killed her grandchildren in their infancy that she might reign without a rival, queen of Judah. And whilst their influence and their lives lasted, idolatry, and crime, and every abomination filled the land. The Bible has, in one short sentence, left us a standing monument of the infamy of Athaliah. Speaking of her son, Ahaziah, it says: "His mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." Alas! how many public crimes and calamities, in every age, are explained by that sentence.

The deep and fearful significance of this mournful fact lies in this—that when woman, fired with the demon of ambition, once lays aside that peculiar character which God hath given her for a glory and a covering, and attempts to assume the character and play the part of man on the world's great stage, instead of raising manhood to the skies she only sinks it to the level of the brute or demon. A man does not more unsex himself and discredit humanity, by wearing a woman's garb and acting a woman's part in life, than do women degrade and unwoman themselves when they strive to be like men. Jezebel and Athaliah tried to make themselves men, and succeeded only in making themselves fiends. Their example is as full of warning as it is of woe. But they have not been without their successors and imitators. Many others, undeterred by their awful fate, have attempted to play, on a larger or smaller scale, the same desperate game of ambition and folly. One of the most noted instances in modern history is that of the highly-gifted, but eccentric Christina, queen of Sweden. Restless, dissatisfied, and unhappy, even on the throne, because Providence had not made

her a man, she at length, to the grief and mortification of her people, abdicated the throne, apostatized from the religion of her Protestant father, and left her native land to wander over Europe in the dress of a man. Assuming male attire, and dismissing all her female attendants on the border, she renounced her country, her religion, her sex, and, as we think, her character as a woman, with the declaration : " I would become a man ; but it is not that I love men because they are men, but merely that they are not women."

Alas ! have we not reason to fear, that the succession in this unwomanly and wicked folly, has not yet ceased ? Are there not still those who, instead of honoring that noble and glorious heritage of womanhood which God hath given them, are filled with a miserable ambition to be like men, and spend their lives in an open quarrel against earth and heaven, because they are not and cannot be men ?

IX.—HERODIAS AND HER DANCING DAUGHTER.

In this connection it may not be out of place to introduce another mother and daughter of somewhat similar character from the pages of the New Testament. Among the very few dark pictures of female character in these later Scriptures, there is one that stands out prominently as a warning to all generations. It is that of the incestuous wife of Philip, and her dancing daughter, whose life of sinful pleasure demanded no less a sacrifice than the blood of John the Baptist.

It is somewhat doubtful whether the daughter of Herodias ought to be classed among the women or children of the New

Testament at the time she is represented as dancing before Herod. She may have been a woman grown, or nearly grown, at that time. It is more probable, however, that she was a young girl, as yet entirely subservient to the will of her wicked mother. The readiness with which she let go the opportunity of gaining some splendid present from the king for herself, in order to gratify her mother's unreasonable and atrocious request for the head of John the Baptist, seems to show that she had not reached an age to think for herself, but was still within the sphere of girlhood. It was hardly to be expected that any thing good could come out of the Herodian family ; and the incident recorded of this young girl, gives a striking illustration of the depravity which prevailed in what might be called the elegant, fashionable circles of that day. It was then as it is now in such circles—the child was a true mirror to reflect the vices of the parent.

Of all the comments we have seen on this transaction, the most graphic is that of Dr. Kitto, which we here give in his own words : “It was his birth-day, which was celebrated with high festivities at court. The Jews generally disliked the celebration of birth-days : and this was one of the heathen customs which the Herodian family had adopted from the Romans. On the present occasion, Herod gave a great supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates ; and, before it closed, a fair young girl, to whom Herod was greatly attached, was introduced, and commenced one of those solo dances for which the East has long been celebrated. That fair child was Salome, the daughter of Herodias by her former husband. With such marvellous grace and thrilling effect did she perform this dance, that Herod, already warm with wine, became excited, and, in the fervor of his enthusiasm, vowed that she should have what-

ever she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. Little could he imagine what this child had been tutored by her wicked mother to ask ; and he was shocked and grieved, when, instead of some costly bauble, she asked for the head of John the Baptist. The sternest man there must have shuddered to hear from those beautiful young lips the blood-thirsty request, atrociously specific, 'Bring me here the head of John the Baptist in a charger.' John is not only to lose his head, but the bleeding trophy is to be brought to her ; it is to be brought to her *there*, that there may be no evasion ; that the high lords who have heard the vow, may witness its fulfillment. Then she tells *how* it is to be brought. Not in any careless way, not in a napkin, not held by the hair, but in a dish ; so that she—that young girl—may receive it into her own hands, and take it where she pleased, without danger of soiling her rich dress with a prophet's blood. This is frightful. It was done, nevertheless. A man was sent to behead John in prison ; and presently it was brought to the young princess, who, doubtless, received it with becoming grace, and bore it off daintily to her mother. That the girl could go through all this, however well tutored, seems to show that Salome was indeed a true daughter of Herodias. How she received this precious gift we are not told ; but there is a tradition that she drew forth the still warm tongue that had rebuked her crimes, and vengefully transfixed it with her bodkin."

Poor young girl ! what an education had she received ! Her mother, no doubt, looked with pride upon her splendid accomplishments. What treasure had she not expended in teaching her to dance ! And now, though so young, she was perfect, even in the sight of the king and all his great lords ! An elegant dancer, with a mind utterly destitute of intellectual and moral culture ! Her mother had succeeded in making her

an adept in that accomplishment, in which any stage-player or circus-rider might have excelled her, and had left her destitute of that intellectual grace, without which woman is a cipher, and of that moral grace, without which she soon becomes a monster. She was the daughter of a royal house, and she could dance, but her young hands were stained with a prophet's blood, chiefly because of her superiority in dancing. How much better would it have been for her if she had never learned to dance ! How much better if her name had come down to us, like that of another and humbler Salome, who, probably, never danced at all, but lives embalmed in the most precious of all memorials, as one who watched at the sepulchre of Jesus. Who would now exchange the reputation, not to say the lot, of Salome, watching at the tomb, for that of Salome, the dancing daughter of a queen ?

And what a commentary, by the way, does this case afford on the boasted accomplishment of dancing ! The evil of dancing consisted then, as it always has consisted, not in the dancing itself, but in the things it leads to. In that case it led to a sinful excitement, a foolish oath, and an awful murder. And in how many cases has it led to the loss of health, the loss of life, and the loss of the soul ? In how many cases has it blotted out forever every serious impression, and prepared the young to run a career of folly and reckless dissipation ? And is it no sin for Christian parents, knowing the evils to which dancing is sure to lead, deliberately to teach their children this dangerous accomplishment ? Will they give them cards, and not expect them to gamble ? Will they send them to the theatre, and not expect them to be injured ? Will they send them to the race-course, and then caution them to beware of evil influences ? And shall they train their children to all the " misty mazes "

of the dance, and yet, with strange inconsistency, expect God to convert and save them, while thus placing one of the greatest obstacles in the way ?

Salome's dancing was evil, because it led to evil. And yet this was the least objectionable form of dancing. It was a solo dance, and that by a female ; and that too at home in her mother's house. The advocates of our modern, promiscuous dancing, sometimes pretend to justify it by the Scriptures. But they forget that no such thing as the dancing of the sexes together is to be found in the Scriptures. There are instances of a man dancing alone in a religious service, as David did ; and many instances where women danced with women as Miriam at the Red Sea ; but we can confidently affirm, that there is not a single example of our modern fashion of the sexes dancing together, in all the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. No man can show any place in the Bible where men joined with women in the dance. And for this ancient custom some tolerable reason might be given. For if healthful exercise of the body is the thing aimed at in dancing, why not let ladies take it alone and under circumstances where they can get the full benefit of it, untrammelled by the presence of men ? Does common sense require people to take exercise at night in crowded suffocating rooms, in full dress, bound and girdled to very compression ? Can you imagine anything more uncongenial to a lady's health than the late hours, the torturing, tight dress, and the violent yet constrained exertion, of the ball-room ? When men perform their hardest labor, they wish to be alone, or in the open air, or at least freed from the burden of much dress. But delicate ladies go through the excessive fatigues of the dance, often the hardest labor of their lives, the very victims and martyrs of the fashionable dress-maker, and all this for the sake of healthful

exercise ! Surely, the flimsiest of all sophistries is the pretence that health can be promoted under the artificial and absurd conditions of our promiscuous dancing. If health be the object, let ladies dance at home immediately after the morning bath, the earlier the better. If there be "a time to dance," that would be the best time.

But if graceful motion be the thing aimed at, why mix it up with the uncouth and grotesque awkwardness of the male dancer ? As for men, they certainly can find a better species of exercise ; and gracefulness, in their case, is out of the question. We may be free to admit, there is something womanly and graceful in the movement of the female dancer ; though even in her case, the gracefulness is mainly owing to the flowing dress, or to personal beauty. If the lady is naturally graceful and comely, she would look just as well on horseback, or on a morning or evening walk, as in the dance. If she is ugly, and badly dressed, no extra skill in dancing can redeem the performance from contempt. So that, even in the female dancer, this boasted gracefulness of movement is far more dependent upon other accidental circumstances, than upon any intrinsic beauty in the act of dancing. The grace is in the person, not in her movements, and would belong to her just as well if she did not dance at all.

But be the case as it may with a young girl, who ever saw anything graceful and dignified in the dancing of men ? To us, the whole thing of a man's dancing is absurd and ridiculous to the last degree. If there were nothing else against it, the closely-cut dress of our modern man of fashion, fitting his body and limbs like the bark of a tree, renders graceful dancing an impossibility. There is no poetry in any such exhibition of a man, or of any other animal clad as he is. For if the man is

large and heavy, the spectacle calls up the image of an elephant whose very footstep shakes the ground. If the man is small and frisky, we are constantly reminded of the fitful antics of a monkey or baboon. If the performer is tall and slender, who knows when his excessive gyrations may bring him down like a sapling before the wind. Whatever dancing may be as an amusement for women and children, we cannot rank it among the manly sports and performances. The actions of man are graceful only as they are manly ; and they are manly only as they are in keeping with the duties and responsibilities of men. On this principle, all the exercises of labor in art and industry may be graceful ; the evolutions of the soldier under arms may be graceful ; the bearing of gentlemen in all the needful intercourse of society may be graceful. But dancing, being a mere amusement, in no way related to any of the needful employments of life, can be defended on no such ground as that of dignified, manly exercise ; but must stand as a mere amusement, on its own intrinsic propriety, if indeed it has any. Stripped, then, as it is, of every element of that kind of beauty which springs from utility to the purposes of life, what is there left of it, as a mere amusement, to make it decorous in men ? Suppose you could behold a company of men alone to themselves, dancing with each other for mere amusement, or dancing in public for the edification of others, what would be your impressions of the scene ? Would you call that a natural and manly sport ? No. Your contempt for an exhibition so puerile would be in exact proportion to two things : first, the zest with which they enjoyed it ; and secondly, the age and standing of the men who could be thus amused. Hence, we say, dancing was never intended for man ; least of all for our modern cloth-harnessed man. And if our fine gentlemen must dance, they ought

out of mere poetic justice, to assume the toga of the ancients ; or else, for the sake of this peculiarly feminine amusement into which they have intruded, they ought to borrow a belt and a skirt from their lady partners.

There is no disputing about tastes, according to the ancient maxim, and thus we account for the extreme favor in which dancing has been held in our modern fashionable world. As to the moral bearing of it, history shows that it has ever flourished most in two opposite stages of society—in the barbarous state, as among all savage tribes, and in a corrupt, degenerate civilization, as during the decline of the Roman empire. It is, however, not the only relic of barbarism on the one hand, and of degeneracy on the other, which has been adopted as the peculiar favorite of our most refined aristocratic circles. The theatre can boast the same authority and duelling also—two far worse things than dancing, though upheld by that same sort of taste which rejoices in the dance.

But as touching the classic beauty of man's dancing, we are very willing to abide by the decision of the old Greeks and Romans. Most assuredly, these masters of the fine arts, who have filled the world with monuments of classic taste, were competent judges of everything that could be deemed essential to grace and accomplishment in man or woman. They had their dances. But with them it was a performance assigned to women and children, or to hired professional characters, trained for the purpose. They went to see the dance, just as they went to see the circus, or stage plays ; but they never thought of dancing themselves ; at least, such as had any self respect, or claim to gentility. Who ever heard of Roman ladies, or wives and daughters of Grecian heroes, dancing with men ? Who ever read of Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, or Pompey,

or Demosthenes, dancing like a young girl? Think of a Roman senator dancing in public or private for his own or anybody's amusement! Think of these world-conquerors, whose aspirations from boyhood were all of glory, exhibiting themselves in that capacity to which the young gentlemen of our day aspire—the capacity of an exquisite dancer—the brilliant achievement of a ball-room renown! It was only as Roman virtue began to decay, under the corrupt sway of the Emperors, and effeminate luxury to eat out all manly heroism from the hearts and habits of the people, that dancing won its way into the higher circles. In the days of Cicero, the sentiment of the genteel, fashionable world was that which he expressed; “No man dances unless he is mad or drunk.” If dancing was thus thought unmanly, when the performers had the long, flowing Grecian and Roman dress to redeem it from contempt, how much more undignified is it now, when the prim, starched, tight-fitting attire of the gentleman dancer, instead of concealing only exposes the muscular machinery by which the performance is carried on! We do not wonder (if the anecdote be authentic) that such a man as Daniel Webster, when accosted in the saloons at Washington by one of those sprightly young gentlemen who think that the earth would not revolve if the dance should cease, and imploringly asked if he did not dance, should have replied: “No, sir; I never believed that I had the capacity to learn.” We cannot guarantee that Mr. Webster ever said it, for it is only a newspaper report: we are very sure, however, that he ought to have said it, for it is in perfect keeping, alike with the good taste and the greatness of such a man, that he should never discover that he had any capacity to dance.

Viewed in all its pleas, we can see no defence of our modern,

promiscuous dancing, from the charge of being an irrational, unscriptural and injurious custom ; and until the world gets back to the religious solo dance, or the exclusively female dance, of the Bible, we shall remain in the opposition to all dancing ; and we would, in fact, be glad to see the whole ceremony extirpated from civilized society as an unmeaning and useless waste of time—the offspring of a barbarous, and the idol of a degenerate age.

X.—ABIGAIL, HANNAH, AND MARTHA.

But gladly leaving these dark pictures of warning and woe, let us turn now to three very prominent examples of a different order—three admirable women, who lived at different periods, but may be fitly associated in the same group. Hannah, Abigail, and Martha, had not much in common, either as to their history or their condition in life ; and yet there was a solid basis of character, consisting in energy, earnestness, prudence, and sound common sense, which belonged to the three alike, and strongly distinguished them. The wise, the amiable, the judicious wife of David, the earnest, devout and self-denying mother of Samuel, the energetic, hospitable, affectionate sister of Lazarus, taken altogether, present us with a rare assemblage of the virtues which should adorn a woman.

We know not whether Solomon drew his pictures from real life, or from the records of the ancients. We know not that any real personage sat as the original of that unrivalled portraiture of womanly excellence, which he has drawn for us in the closing chapter of the book of Proverbs. If, however, we might select any one out of the hundred women of the Bible, who was worthy to sit for such a picture, and who came nearest to the

realization of that splendid impersonation of the perfect lady, as a wife and mother, we should select one of these ; we should select the wise and amiable Abigail, or the devout and holy Hannah. But the probability is, that Solomon, like all other great artists, drew his images of beauty, not from any one, but from many living forms. And so, if we take the excellences of this threefold group, and add them all together—if we take the holy Hannah, the wise Abigail, and the industrious Martha, and blend their virtues all in one character, combining the piety of the mother with the wisdom of the wife and the energy of the sister, we may (excusing the anachronism) realize the *beau ideal* of this matchless description. You have doubtless, often admired this gem from the sacred cabinet, or, to speak more properly, this crown, all radiant with gold and diamonds and precious stones, which the royal poet hath wrought for the moral and spiritual coronation of woman. We may safely affirm, that, after nearly three thousand years of progress and improvement, you cannot find in human literature either in its poetry or its prose, Burke's celebrated picture of his wife included, a finer and more complete impersonation of all that constitutes the glory and the true mission of woman in the world, than we have in his description of a lady of the olden time. As you read it, think of Abigail, Hannah, and Martha, of the Bible, as sitting for the picture, and do not fail to commend it to the Abigails, Hannahs, and Marthas of our own day.

“ Who can find a virtuous woman ?

For her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,

So that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool and flax,

And worketh willingly with her hands.

And she is like the merchant's ships ;
She bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night,
And giveth meat to her household,
And a portion to her maidens,
She considereth a field, and buyeth it ;
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a **vineyard.**
She girdeth her loins with strength,
And strengtheneth her arms.
She perceiveth that her merchandise is good :
Her candle goeth not out by night.
She layeth her hands to the spindle,
And her hands hold the distaff.
She stretcheth out her hand to the poor ;
Yea, she reacheth forth her hand to the needy.
She is not afraid of the snow for her household ;
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
She maketh herself coverings of tapestry ;
Her clothing is silk and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sitteth among the elders of the **land.**
She maketh fine linen and selleth it ;
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
Strength and honor are her clothing ;
And she shall rejoice in time to come.
She openeth her mouth with wisdom ;
And in her tongue is the law of kindness.
She looketh well to the ways of her **household,**
And eateth not the bread of idleness.
Her children arise up and call her **blessed :**
Her husband also, and he praiseth her.
Many daughters have done virtuously,
But thou excellest them all !
Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain ;
But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be **praised.**
Give her of the fruit of her hands.
And let her own works praise her in the gates."

XI.—MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AND MARY OF BETHANY.

Almost all the women of the New Testament are worthy of our admiration. With their characters you are already so familiar that we need not dwell upon them long. We can know them but to love them, and “name them but to praise.” It would be a pleasing task to set forth the virtues of the pious Elizabeth, the aged Anna, the charitable Dorcas, the hospitable Lydia, the warm-hearted Mary Magdalene. But we must pass over all these to speak of two others, who are, perhaps the most remarkable of the whole New Testament group—Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary of Bethany. You are, probably, aware that there are five Marys mentioned in the New Testament—Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary the mother of Mark, in addition to the three already named. But the central object of the whole group is the Virgin Mother of our Lord.

The Papists have gone to such an absurd extreme in their idolatrous exaltation of the Virgin Mary, that Protestants, avoiding their error, are scarcely prepared to appreciate her character as the Bible warrants. We must not, however, fall into the opposite extreme of withholding our respect and admiration from the one woman of our race, who was accounted worthy to be the medium of the Divine Incarnation, and from whom the Son of God derived his human nature, and, to some extent, his human character. No such glory as this belongs to any other woman. But, aside from this distinction, there is not a female character in all the Bible adorned with nobler attributes or lovelier virtues. She wins our affections by her humble, unaffected piety ; she wins our sympathies by her un-

wanted trials ; not less than our admiration, by the unusual glory which heaven conferred upon her. The angel Gabriel pronounced her the "highly favored of the Lord, blessed among women ;" and, in her own beautiful song of thanksgiving to the God of Abraham, she exclaims, by the spirit of prophecy, "All nations shall call me blessed." But though she knew all this, and rejoiced in the honor of being the mother of Israel's long-predicted Messiah—the virgin mother to whom was committed the care of the infancy and childhood of the Immanuel of the prophets ; yet, through life, she seemed never elated with vanity or ambition, but stands as a model, even to the lowliest of women, by that uncomplaining devotion with which she identified herself with the humble fortunes of Joseph, and that motherly tenderness with which she watched the destiny of Jesus. As we follow her, the highly-favored of the Lord, the angel-honored woman, through all the shifting scenes of her history—the manger at Bethlehem, the offerings of the wise men, the interview with Simeon and Anna at the temple, the flight into Egypt, the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, the journey to the passover, the three days' search for the child at Jerusalem, the marriage at Cana in Galilee, the press through the crowd to speak with him, the attendance at the crucifixion—as we follow her thus, from the manger to the cross, and see the devoted wife, the yearning mother, the true-hearted woman, pondering all these things, and bearing all these things, until, at last she stands at the cross, supported by her companions in tears, and even then, whilst the "sword is piercing her own soul," ministering, as best she can, to the dying sorrows of her Son and Lord, by whom she is committed to the protection of the beloved disciple—we cannot withhold from her, and we would not, if we could, the tribute of our tears It is a relief

and a privilege to join with all generations in calling her blessed, in admiring the character and revering the memory of such a woman. We will not, because we are Protestants, consent to lose our inheritance in such a character. Such a character is the common legacy of her sex, and of all mankind, handed down as an incentive to virtue, by being a living exemplification of its power. Such examples reconcile us to life, and help to prepare us for heaven, by making us feel that celestial grace may clothe itself in the frail garments of humanity, and dwell, for a season, here on earth as an angel of mercy.

“Earth has its angels, though their forms are moulded
 But of such clay as fashions all below,
 Though harps are wanting, and bright pinions folded
 We know them by the love-light on their brow.

“I have seen angels by the sick one’s pillow ;
 Theirs was the soft tone and the soundless tread ;
 When smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
 They stood between the living and the dead.

“There have been angels in the gloomy prison,
 In crowded halls, by the lone widow’s hearth,
 And where they passed the fallen have uprisen—
 The giddy paused, the mourner’s hope had birth.

“I have seen one whose eloquence, commanding,
 Roused the rich echoes of the human breast ;
 The blandishments of wealth and ease withstanding,
 That hope might reach the suffering and oppress.

“And by his side there moved a form of beauty,
 Strewing sweet flowers along his path of life,
 And looking up with meek and love-blent duty—
 I called her angel, but he called her wife.

“O, many a spirit walks the earth unheeded,
That when its veil of sadness is laid down,
Shall soar aloft with pinions unimpeded,
And wear its glories like a starry crown.”

Such was Mary, the mother of Jesus. And such, also, though in a different way, was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus, the loving disciple of Jesus. With her, the last but not the least, in this long gallery of Scripture portraits, we must now bring our remarks to a close. No one could more appropriately close the scene. There is a charm in her simple story that renders her character peculiarly attractive. After all that has been said of the others, if we had to select out of all the hundred any one for a daughter, a sister, or a wife, we should be most likely to choose the affectionate Mary of Bethany.

She it was who chose the good part, sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. She it was, also, who, a few evenings before his death, brought her beautiful alabaster box of sweet perfume, and poured it upon his head as a consecration for the tomb. And for this act of deep devotion and unutterable love, she received the only eulogium of fame which the Son of God ever pronounced ; almost the only personal eulogium which is pronounced on man or woman in all the Bible—“ Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done, shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.”

And how truly has that prediction been verified ! How wondrously, while other great deeds have been forgotten, has that little act filled the world with its fame ! Who, for eighteen centuries, has not heard the praise, and read the memorial of Mary's love ! What numbers have been won, and what num-

bers more shall yet be won to Jesus, by the beauty of Mary's youthful piety !

The precious perfume of that alabaster box was soon lost upon the evening air of Bethany ; but the perfume of a love that could never die, still remains fresh as the story of the cross. The hands that poured it out, the eyes that wept, the hair that wiped away the falling tears, and the heart that beat in grateful, holy love, were all, after a few brief years, laid to rest in the silent sepulchre of Bethany : but the name and the spirit of Mary still live, immortal on earth and immortal in heaven. Beautifully has it been written of her and of her undying eulogium :

“Thou hast thy record in the monarch's hall,
 And on the waters of the far mid sea ;
 And where the mighty mountain shadows fall,
 The Alpine hamlet keeps a thought of thee ;
 Where'er, beneath some oriental tree,
 The Christian traveller rests—where'er the child
 Looks upward from the pious mother's knee
 There art thou known—where'er the book of light
 Bears hope and healing ; there, beyond all blight,
 Is borne thy memory, and all praise above ;
 O say, what deed so lifted thy sweet name,
 Mary ! to that pure silent place of fame ?
 One lowly offering of exceeding love.”

Many daughters had done virtuously, but she of Bethany excelled them all. No sceptred monarch, no jewelled queen of earth, ever won such a commendation, or received such a monument as Mary's—“Spoken of as a memorial of her.” The men of this world, in their generation, have delighted to hold in proud and perpetual remembrance all those worthies of

past ages, who, by their learning, their genius, their sufferings, or their swords, have battled most bravely for the rights of man, and have left their marks the deepest on the sands of time.

“Patriots have toiled, and in their country’s cause
Bled nobly, and their deeds as they deserve,
Receive proud recompense.”

In honor of their hallowed dust, and their imperishable deeds, a grateful posterity has loved to pile the monumental column higher and higher, until it “meets the sun in his coming, and the last rays of departing day play around its summit.” The very spots that gave them birth, and the hallowed retreats where their ashes sleep, have been rendered immortal by their presence. Their names have been linked forever with the seas and oceans on which they sailed, and with the ancient rocks, rivers, and mountains, where their deeds of mighty daring were done. The muse has touched her lyre with unusual melody, and invoked her loftiest inspiration to chant their requiem in immortal verse :

“They fell devoted but undying,
The very gale their names seemed sighing ;
The waters murmured of their name,
The woods were peopled with their fame ;
The silent pillar, lone and grey,
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay ,
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o’er the fountain,
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Rolled mingling with their fame forever.”

But here is a richer recompense, a more enduring monument, a higher glory. Here, on these sacred pages, is a memorial, which will last when woods and waters, pillars and temples, rivers, mountains and sparkling fountains, shall all have passed away. The good name, and the unsought fame, of Mary of Bethany, shall outshine and outlast all the mere heroes and heroines of earth, as the sun outshines the stars of night, and as the Divine outlasts the human.

XII.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Such is a faint outline of the female biography of the Bible. Has it no attractions? No attractions for the young? No attractions for woman? In what other book can woman find so glorious a record of the past? In what other book can she find so blessed a recompense for the future? To what other book does she owe so much for that beauty of character, dignity of position, and power of moral influence, which she now enjoys in every civilized land? Well may woman stand by the Bible; for in every age, and in every country, it has stood by her. Well may she be the fast friend of the Bible; for the Bible has ever been her best of friends. Well may woman rejoice in the success, and share in the glory, of what the Bible has done for mankind; for it is mainly through its influence on woman that the Bible has reached the heart of the world. It is by making woman what she has been, and what she now is, wherever its influence has been felt at all, that the Bible has been able to do anything for man, or make any headway in bringing the world to its present advanced condition.

The softest, sweetest, purest light, which earth was able to throw around the sorrowful pathway of the Son of God, as he

toiled for our good, was the light which sympathizing woman shed, as she ministered to his wants. It is to the eternal honor of woman, that she had nothing to do with the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God. The women of Galilee and the daughters of Jerusalem ministered to him and sympathized with him to the last. So far as our record goes, no hand or voice of woman was ever lifted against the life of Jesus, and, excepting only the damsel who accused Peter, none against his disciples. Even the heathen wife of Pilate made an effort to save him. In that darkest, bloodiest, tragedy of history, so far as we are informed, woman took no part but that of sorrow and sympathy, for the sufferer. There is every reason to think that if woman could have saved him, Jesus would not have been crucified. So, that while she bears the blame of being foremost in the first great transgression, she is not chargeable with the awful guilt and cruelty of the last. Her sole office at the crucifixion was to watch and weep, and, so far as she could, mitigate the sorrows of her suffering Saviour.

And so in return for this sympathy, the most blessed and cheering light, which heaven, in its mercy, has ever thrown around the suffering pathway of woman, on earth, is the light which shines out from the Bible and the cross. Heaven was pleased when the daughters of Israel received the Son of God to their houses and their hearts; and, to the daughters of every land and generation, heaven has repaid their friendship a thousandfold, by that gift of gifts—the Bible. The women of the Bible, especially those of the New Testament, in the part they enacted in the history of Jesus, are the typical characters of their sex for all the ages to come. They stood at the cross, as the true representative women of Christianity. It is not to be overlooked, that they stood there, bearing all the high social

relations which have since constituted the peculiar charm and glory of Christian woman ; in the character of mother and wife and sister and maiden, performing their holy ministries of love in that awful scene. The brief reference of the Evangelist to them is deeply significant. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Where should a mother and wife and sister be, if not at such a scene ? And from that day to this, when has Christian woman ever failed to be at the cross of suffering virtue !

Here at the cross we behold the grand inauguration of woman's true mission and vocation amongst men. Here was she called and consecrated of God, as by a new baptism, to that companionship with suffering, and to those offices of kindness and condescension, which were to make her the ministering angel of a dying world from that day onward to the end of time.

Here in the deep, unutterable sympathy of these bleeding but still steadfast, loving hearts, at the cross, we discern the prophetic type of that wonderful combination of character—courage, compassion, fortitude and self-sacrificing devotion—which woman has ever since been winning for herself on a thousand fields, from the days of Anastasia, Monica, and Helena, of the ancient church, down to Elizabeth Fry, Dorothea Dix, Lady Colquhoun and Florence Nightingale of our own times.

And truly, if we needed any demonstration that the Christianity of this nineteenth century is a vital power in the earth, we have it in the fact that woman is still true to that great commission which was given her at the cross : that in the name of Jesus, she is willing to sacrifice all, to suffer all, to toil and die for the perishing. We have the proof in such a life as that of Ann Hasseltine Judson. We have the triumphant vindication

in such a character as that of Florence Nightingale. And the homage which the world—even the infidel world—is paying to such virtue, is but an unconscious tribute paid to the truth of Christianity. For what but that mighty influence of redeeming love which first attracted the women of Galilee to the cross of their suffering Saviour, could have called these young women away from their homes of elegant ease and affluence—the one to go and die upon an inhospitable heathen coast after years of privation and peril, the other to brave all the risks of war and pestilence in a foreign land, and to watch day and night at the couch of sickness and death. What book but the Bible, and what influence but that which went forth from Calvary, ever formed a character like this? If goodness be a test of truth, who will dare to say, in the face of such examples, that Christianity is not the very truth of God?

You need not fear to place the Bible in the hands of your daughters, just as it is, and in all its parts. For though it treats, with unsparing fidelity, of all subjects, and all shades of character, the vicious and the vile, as well as the virtuous and the good, yet, unlike any other book of genius, it leaves on all a hallowed influence. No one was ever corrupted by the plain-spoken simplicity of the Bible.

Like the light of heaven, it is never contaminated by contact with impurity. It is as pure when shining on the stagnant marsh, as when playing around the tops of the snow-clad mountains. Beautifully and truly has it been said, that, “the finger of inspiration, like the finger of the sunbeam, touches corruption, and still remains pure.” For, when the Bible speaks on themes too delicate for common speech, we are made to feel as though we were listening to the voice of God.

For beauty and sublimity, for taste and genius, for truth and

purity, there is no book of education for our sons and daughters in the world, that can take the place of the Bible. It is the book which every pious woman seeks to put into the hands of her child, as the earliest and best pledge of a mother's love, and which, ere long, when she comes to make her last legacy, she wishes to leave as a holy relic, sacred to a dying mother's memory. Whatever has been the success of the Bible on other fields, there is one field where its triumph has been complete, so far as it has gone. It has gained the female heart. It has won the victory of woman's love. It has linked her destiny with its own in the everlasting bonds of mutual affection and mutual interest. And the hold, which the Bible has to-day throughout Christendom upon the heart of woman, is as strong and indissoluble as that which woman herself has upon the heart of man. So, that if the infidel sneer were true, that the Bible is fit only for women and children, it would be none the less true, that it has thereby controlled the destiny of the world. For as all men, infidels included, were once children born of women, how could God make a book more fit for man than by making it fit for women and children.

But we must close ; and we know not how to close such a theme more appropriately than in the strong hypothetical language of another : " If Christianity should ever be compelled to flee from the mansions of the great and the noble, from the academies of philosophy and the halls of legislation, from the thrones of power and the throngs of busy men, we should find her last retreat around the hearth-stones of Christian homes, her last sanctuary in the hearts of the women and children of our firesides ; her last altar on earth would be the female heart ; her last audience, the children gathered around a mother's knees ; her last sacrifice, the secret prayer escaping in silence from her lips, and heard perhaps, on'y at the throne of God."

CHAPTER VI.

REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG MEN OF THE BIBLE.

Range and Limits of the Theme—The First of Young Men—The First Two Brothers—Character of Joseph—The Youth of Moses—Sketch of David and Jonathan—Sketch of Samuel and Saul—Saul and Samuel at Endor—Character of Absalom—The Young Man as Sovereign—The Young Men of the Captivity—Young Men of the New Testament.

I.—RANGE AND LIMITS OF THE THEME.

IN speaking of the Young Men of the Bible as one of its attractions, and introducing them to you as the subject of a separate chapter, we would not, by any means, wish to incur the charge of taking undue liberty with sacred and venerable names ; or, of attempting to modernize antiquity beyond what is just and reasonable. Some degree of familiarity of this kind may do us good, just as it does to be brought into immediate contact or communication with the distant parts of the earth. We must modernize antiquity, somewhat, in order to appreciate it ; even as we translate foreign tongues into our own idiom before we can feel their full import. The time is probably not distant, when the whistle of the steam-car shall be heard over the hallowed hills of Judea, and the electric telegraph will, no doubt, soon stretch its wires along the base of Ararat and across the plains of Shinar. And so, the more we can be made to feel that our antipodes on the other side of the globe are our

fellow-citizens, and the more we can be made to realize that the antediluvians on the other side of the flood were our brothers, men of like passions with ourselves, the better shall we understand them, and the better will it be for the world.

The young men of the Bible ! How rich, how comprehensive, how suggestive the theme ! How full of hope to the aged, how full of enthusiasm to the young, how fraught with interest to all ! The majority of men in our day claim to be young men ; at any rate, feel themselves to be young ; and this, for all the purposes of energetic life, is, in fact, equivalent to being young. To picture to ourselves the men of antiquity as young men, is, therefore the most effective mode of bringing them home to our own experience ; because it is as young men that we have most in common with them. It is as if the old world and the new stood face to face, and thus shook hands with each other on friendly and familiar terms.

The patriarchs of the Bible, who stand in solemn grandeur, like sentinels along the lines of history, or, like mighty monarchs with the crown of centuries upon their heads, were all young men once ; as truly young and hopeful as any of us. And if we wish them to come down from their hereditary heights to converse with us awhile, we must conceive of them as young men, like ourselves. Let us endeavor to get the impression fully into our minds that the first men in the world were young men ; that, before there were any patriarchs or venerable names in history, young men stood forth upon the stage of life as the fresh materials out of which all the patriarchs and ancients of history had to be fashioned. The child, it has been said, is father to the man ; in the same sense, the young men of the earliest ages have become the founders and forefathers of the world. To them belongs, unsought, the high

distinction of being the model men of all ages, the original fountains of all biography, the forefathers of all history. They have become to all generations, what they were to their immediate successors, the primitive and standing types of humanity, the representative ideas after which all other men have been, to some extent, moulded into their several shapes and characters of greatness.

The young men of the Bible have been imitated, reproduced, and rivalled, a thousand times by their successors ; but they have never yet been surpassed by any of them, either in native genius, in mighty prowess, in heroic achievement, or, in exalted piety. Born amid the glories of a new-created world, cradled in the lap of the most ancient civilization of our race, blessed with the birthright of the earliest of all human primogeniture, and crowned by God himself as kings and priests of this whole visible creation, they have ever stood prominent amongst men, like Saul among the Benjamites. They have held their supremacy through all the lapse of time ; and no young man of their successors has ever been able to snatch from their grasp the sceptre of wisdom, power, and glory.

There have been mighty men of valor and renown in every age ; giants have walked the earth more than once, and the sons of genius have scaled the mountains in almost every ancient and modern land ; more than one young Scipio has wrested glory from the hands of an aged Hannibal ; more than one Pitt wielded the helm of statesmanship and empire in early youth ; many a young man, even in our day, when individual power is well-nigh lost in that of the masses, has made his mark upon the world, and left his foot-prints deeply imbedded in the sands of time. But then it must never be forgotten, that whatever heights of glory, valor, and virtue, these mighty men of

modern times have attained, they have been greatly indebted to the examples of greatness set before them in the Bible ; they have only followed the patterns of genius which have been shown to them in this ancient mount of God. It is fortunate for mankind, that, while the earth was yet fresh and fair,—youth still in its bloom, the life-blood of enthusiasm beating at the full, and the fires of genius undimmed by disease and premature decay,—some of the earliest and the largest specimens of man should have been caught in the net of history, whilst the pen of a ready writer was at hand, to describe and record them in a book, for our learning. It is not the least, among the many services which the Bible has done for the world, that it has transmitted to us these specimens of a primitive, giant growth ; relics and memorials of physical, intellectual and moral manhood, stereotyped, as it were, or fossilized, for the studies of the youth of all generations, like those gigantic remains of a pre-Adamite world, which once caught and caged within the rocks, have at last been revealed for the contemplation and the wonder of modern geologists.

The young men of the Bible, in one sense, would include all the men of whom it speaks ; inasmuch as they were all once young. But this would give us a theme co-extensive with the whole range of Scripture biography, a theme far too wide for our present purpose. It is proposed, at present, to take a more limited view ; to confine ourselves to the biography of those who are described as young men, and who are celebrated for the qualities they possessed, or the achievements they wrought, in the days of their youth. And even from this number, which is also too large to be embraced in a single chapter, we must select only the most remarkable examples. We shall aim to present to you those notable personages that stand out in bold

relief on the canvas of inspiration, most strongly marked with the several attributes of genius, wisdom, courage, piety, ambition or folly ; such as will best serve to set before us a picture of the young man in all his moods of mind, in all his shades of character, and in all his changes of fortune ; illustrating, at one view, his highest ascent on the pathway of glory when virtuous, and his deepest degradation in the abyss of ruin when depraved. For it is thus, by the mingling of the good and the bad together, that the Bible would teach us the great, double lesson, to be warned from hell by the woes of the one, and allured to heaven by the example of the other. But, even in this last selection, it will be our privilege and our choice to lean strongly to virtue's side. Of the several characters, who are now to pass under review, about twenty in all, it will be found that the large majority were such as feared God from early youth, and made their lives illustrious in virtue, while only a few attained the bad preëminence of guilt and folly. It is with the young men of the Bible generally, as it was with the apostles of Christ, one Judas associated with eleven good men. And, whilst many other examples might be mentioned, both among the evil and the good, still the twenty, here selected, seem to stand out so prominently above their fellows, as to justify our designation of them as the Representative Young Men of the Bible.

II.—THE FIRST OF YOUNG MEN.

And who shall head the list ? Shall any one stand before him, who, fresh as a morning in Paradise, stood forth in all the beauty and manly vigor of a life just begun, at once the noblest work and brightest image of Jehovah ? It is manifest, that no

enumeration of the young men of the Bible would be complete without Adam, the first of men. His was the first young breath ; the first throbbing pulse, of an almost infinite series. He was the earliest link of life in a chain, which is still unbroken, and is ever stretching onwards. He was a young man in a double sense : first, young as to time, compared with what he was when he died : and, secondly, young in nature, because created immortal, in a state absolutely free from any principle of decay, disease, or death. At his creation he was young in years ; and, by nature, he was young in immortality, even as an angel is always young ; and, but for sin, he would never have grown old. Even after the temptation and fall, he must be regarded as a young man for at least fifty or a hundred years. For, when men lived almost a thousand years, this would be a shorter allowance for youth and early manhood than twenty or even ten years now. But it is recorded of Adam, that he lived nine hundred and thirty years : and this alone, if there were nothing else, would be sufficient to show that it was not as an old man, nor indeed as a man of middle age, but as a young man, Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator—young and fresh as the green trees of Paradise, young and radiant as the roses that bloomed along its banks, young and joyous as the birds that warbled amid its bowers, young and beautiful as the new-created light of the morning, young and vigorous as the rising sun, when he “ cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.”

It is as a young man only, that our present theme calls us to speak of Adam. But it is chiefly as a young man, you will observe, that the Bible speaks of him. It tells us nothing about the deeds of his life's meridian, or the events of the long centuries of his declining old age. Aside from the single verse

that writes his epitaph, the shadow of an impenetrable oblivion hangs over the last and larger portion of his years. In fact, all we know of Adam belongs to what may be called the season of his youth. All the great things which he did or suffered, by which he left his mark upon mankind, and all the grand events, which the providence of God accomplished by him, took place while he was yet a young man. His communion, face to face, with God ; his investiture with dominion over all the visible creation : his probation as the federal head and representative of our race ; his union in marriage with a help-meet, who, by sharing his nature, was worthy to share his joys and destined to share his woes ; his transgression and fall with her ; his condemnation and expulsion from Eden ; his forfeiture of the Divine favor, and of life for himself and all his posterity—these constituted the great events of the life of Adam, and all these must have occurred before he had ceased to be a young man. To the same period, indeed, must be referred the birth and education of his two eldest sons.

And what a contrast of extremes did his life exhibit ! As the first sovereign, the first husband, the first father, the first sinning and sorrowing man, how speedily did he pass through all those scenes of trial, those alternations of bliss and woe, hope and despair, glory and shame, which made the life of the first young man forever memorable as a picture and prophecy of the whole world ! The history of nearly six thousand years has been but a vindication of his title as our federal head and representative. No claim on earth was ever attested by a fuller record or stronger array of facts.

Before he sinned he stood upon an eminence of light, of wisdom, knowledge, glory, purity, and blessedness, which no one of his successors has ever reached save he who was the second Adam.

The genius of Haydn, in the grand oratorio of the Creation, has soared on its sublimest pinions, when celebrating the glory of his person, the excellence of his character, and the felicity of his original estate.

“In native worth and honor clad,
 With beauty, courage, strength adorned,
 Erect with front serene he stands,
 A man, the lord and king of nature all.
 His large and arched brow sublime,
 Of wisdom deep declares the seat,
 And in his eyes with brightness shines,
 The soul, the breath and image of his God.
 With fondness leans upon his breast,
 The partner for him formed,
 A woman fair and graceful spouse ;
 Her softly smiling virgin looks,
 Of flowery spring the mirror,
 Bespeak him love and joy and bliss.”

But there was a change. Oh, how rapid and mournful the change ! By one act he stooped from glory to disgrace, from the heights of immaculate purity and Divine companionship, to the depths of corruption, desolation, and death. It was a transition not merely from life, but from immortality to death. By one act of disloyalty and treason against the Author of his being, his spiritual and immortal beauty was forever marred, his physical strength decayed, his honor in the dust. The silver cord of youth was loosed, the golden bowl of glory broken, the pitcher with all its nectared waters of life crushed at the fountain, and the wheel that should have drawn endless supplies from the wells of immortality, shattered into fragments at the cistern.

In this first apostasy, we behold an illustration, as lasting as

our race, of the fearful turpitude of sin. In the awful consequences which have flowed and are still flowing, wide as the world and ceaseless as the course of time, from that first sin of the first of young men, God has taught the world, as though the buried dead of sixty centuries lifted up their solemn voices from the dust, crying, "the way of the transgressor is hard." For if the earth, as we see it now, with all its generations of the living and the dead, is still bearing the curse and paying the penalty of that first transgression, what shall the end be of those who are still living in sin sixty centuries nearer to the day of final reckoning? Ah! there is a voice in the example of this first of men, which will go down to the last of his posterity as fresh and earnest as it comes to us to-day, saying, Take heed, the wages of sin is death.

III.—THE FIRST TWO BROTHERS.

Passing from Adam to his sons, we may dwell, for a moment, on the two brothers, Cain and Abel, as prominent characters among the young men of the Bible. In that fearfully skeptical production of Byron, called the "Mystery of Cain," in which he makes Cain study theology under the instructions of the devil, and utter almost every kind of blasphemy against his Maker, the two brothers are represented as married men at the time of Abel's death. Byron, though a gifted poet, was but a sorry theologian; and it is to be hoped that no young man, however fascinated by his genius, will ever take him as an authority for his faith, or as an example for imitation in matters of religion. Still, in this case, there is nothing in the sacred narrative to contradict his representation of the brothers as married men. The

probability is, that, by an ordinance of marriage made expressly for Adam's family, the sisters of these two brothers had become their wives, and, it may be, the mothers of their children, prior to the dreadful tragedy narrated in the fourth chapter of Genesis. And if so, though the Bible is silent on the subject, this double relationship would seem to give a deeper interest to the recital, and cast a darker gloom over the scene of the first murder and fratricide.

Be this, however, as it may, it is manifest, from the very face of the narrative, that the two brothers were then young men, and of about the same age, possibly twin brothers. They would be comparatively young for that generation, even at the birth of their younger brother, Seth, one hundred and twenty years after the Creation ; for a century could have abated nothing from the vigor of an existence whose natural limit was a millennium. But we know that the death of Abel had already occurred before the birth of Seth, probably some considerable time before.

Contemplate for a moment, then, the case of these first brothers of our race, whose tragic story, short as it is, possesses for us a far deeper interest and significance than that of the celebrated but somewhat fabled Romulus and Remus, to which the greatest empire of the ancient world traced its origin. Children together, the first that ever felt the caresses of parental love ; companions for each other in all sports and pastimes of boyhood from early dawn to even-tide ; the sharers of each other's budding thoughts, the partners in each other's youthful joys, the keepers of each other's ripening counsels, and, as yet, the joint and only heirs apparent to all the world ; young men, each in his occupation blest, the one a shepherd of the flocks with all their living wealth, the other a tiller of the ground with all its teeming produce ; young men, girded with strength and power, with bodily

frames that might endure a thousand years, with knowledge such as Adam and Eve, who had talked face to face with God, could teach them, with intellects only one remove from the inspiration of the Almighty, with enthusiasm fed on all that was sublime and beautiful in the blue heavens overhead and the green earth at their feet—thus blest and thus endowed, these two brothers ought to have lived to love each other, to bless the world, and to glorify God.

And but for sin, they would have done so. Alas, what bitter fruits did the tree of transgression bear in the first family of a fallen race ! apples of Sodom, where lately bloomed the tree of life, and grapes of Gomorrah, where might have flourished the choice vine of Eschol ! The one was righteous, the other wicked. The one was a believer in the promise, and a devout worshiper at the altar of Jehovah ; The other was skeptical, rebellious and ungodly. The first disagreement in the world, the first strife, the first death, originated in a difference of religion. And from that day to this, the deepest, widest distinction amongst men, whether as individuals or nations, has been that which has marked them as religious or irreligious. There is no interest on earth so important as religion ; and there is no distinction of human character so radical and enduring as that which is founded in religion. “ By faith,” says the Bible, “ Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.” In the one, faith wrought good works, secured the favor of God, and ended early in the bliss of heaven. In the other, unbelief and irreligion produced envy, envy brought forth hatred, and hatred soon ended in the guilt of murder. In Cain we look upon the downward career of a young man, portrayed as in a drama of three acts : first, the rebellious sinner against God, then the despiser of his brother’s virtue, and at last the shed-

der of his brother's blood. Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous, he hated him, and hated the God whom he served ; and with nothing to restrain these vindictive and malignant passions, he soon fell, as many a young man has since fallen, never to rise again ; to go down, with the stain of blood on his hands, the brand of infamy on his brow, and the scowl of despair upon his soul, a perpetual proverb and warning to posterity.

But in the brief and beautiful career of righteous Abel, we contemplate the young man on another scale ; the first of true believers, the first of accepted worshipers, and first on the roll of the noble army of martyrs. He was the first to die on earth ; and he died on account of his superior faith and virtue. He fell a victim and a sacrifice at the altar of his religion. It is a significant fact, that the first death on earth was a death of martyrdom for the profession of religion. But by that early death, and by his young and lovely life, he yet speaketh. By his example the world was first taught the grand moral lesson, that death may be more glorious and blessed than life, that it is better to die for virtue than to live in sin. " The living strive, the dead alone are glorious : " and a dead Abel, speaking from the dust, is more sublime than a living Cain, wandering from the haunts of men, and bearing the curse of God. If he was the first to taste death on earth, thus prematurely cut off by the rude hand of violence, he also had the peculiar honor of being the first inhabitant of earth that ever tasted the life and bliss of heaven. And, doubtless, all the faithful and good among the descendants of Adam down to the flood, while they deplored his youthful doom, rejoiced in that entrance, which, through faith and through death, he had gained to a better paradise than that which had been lost on earth. Well might

they commemorate his death, and gather round his tomb to sing his hopeful requiem.

“ The dead,
 The only beautiful who die no more,
 The only blest: the dwellers on the shore
 Of spring fulfilled. The dead! whom call we so?
 They that breathe purer air, that feel, that know
 Things wrapt from us.”

IV.—CHARACTER OF JOSEPH.

But we must pass on ; and, at a single bound, we now cross a long interval of time, from the antediluvian to the postdiluvian world. Much might be said of the youth of Isaac and Ishmael, of Esau and Jacob ; but there are other characters more prominent as young men. Next after Abel on the list of those, who, as young men, have figured largely in Bible history, and left the impress of their character on mankind, must be ranked Joseph in Egypt.

His character indeed is one of the noblest in history, as his life was one of the most eventful. Of merely human characters, his life presents us with perhaps the most admirable and perfect picture which can be found in all the Old Testament biography. In him we behold the nearest approximation to the New Testament characters ; the gentle, affectionate spirit of the beloved disciple seems to shine forth in a young man of extraordinary firmness and decision during a career of unusual trials and hardships. In all the wonderful vicissitudes and fortunes which marked his early career, as the favorite son, the artless dreamer, the envied brother, the sold captive and exile, the falsely accused and im-

prisoned servant, the inspired interpreter, the honored statesman and ruler of all the land of Egypt, we behold the same young man of unsullied honor, unimpeachable purity, noble, generous affections, and steadfast devotion to the God of his fathers.

We look upon his life as one of the most signal and beautiful illustrations which the Bible furnishes of the doctrine of a special providence, ever educing good out of evil, and over-ruling the wickedness of men for the accomplishment of its grand designs. His whole history is doubtless recorded in Scripture, in its opening book, for the purpose of inculcating most impressively the great truth, that there is a God who governs in the affairs of men ; that He, who created the world, as recorded in its first chapter, and who governs it, as evinced by the account of the deluge and the destruction of Sodom, also guides, with unerring skill, the minutest details of human life ; so that promotion cometh not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge ; he putteth down one and setteth up another.

“ There’s a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.”

As we read this early and charming biographical story, we seem to follow a mountain stream, clear and sparkling as it issues from the fountain-head, but meeting soon with many obstructions amid the rocks, falling over many rough and fearful precipices, sometimes almost lost from view in deep, dark glens and tangled forests, then emerging to the sunlight, and then disappearing again ; so that no one, for a while, can tell what direction it will take to the sea, or where it shall empty, or how it shall find egress at all from the hills and mountains that en-

viron it ; until, at last, escaping at a point and through a channel that we least thought of, with every barrier passed, with every obstacle overcome, and as if fresh with strength gathered from all that had impeded its progress, it rolls away across the plains of half a continent, in one deep, onward, ever-widening, and irresistible current, to its home in the world of waters. Such was the current of Joseph's life, from the home of his childhood in the mountains of Canaan, down to the day in which, as a revealer of the future, and a prophet of the Most High, he was proclaimed prime minister in the court of Pharaoh, and second ruler of the kingdom of Egypt. The Scripture narrative, extending through thirteen chapters, is a succession of the most graphic and thrilling scenes, sometimes possessing the tragic interest of a drama, sometimes rising to the third heaven of sublimity in their delineation of true moral heroism, often surpassing in wonder the strangest creations of fiction and romance, and always fraught with the most touching pathos that religion, poetry, and human sympathy can inspire. We feel, while reading it, that there is but one thing on earth so beautiful as truth, and that is virtue.

See him, first, at the age of seventeen, doomed to death by his unnatural brothers, and, as it were, buried alive in a deep pit of the wilderness. What a picture of youthful innocence and virtue suffering wrongfully is that ! What must have been the anguish of his soul as he struggled and begged for life, and then cried for help to the God of his father, there beneath the ground ! And why is he there ? He, the young and tender brother, is thrust down, and left to perish in darkness with starvation, whilst they, the mature, athletic men, sit down quietly to enjoy their daily repast, surrounded by their flocks and herds, and green pastures, and the pleasant light of the sun. It

was probably the first time in the history of the world, and it ought to have been the last, that a child was so treated by men, his brothers.

And what has he done to merit such a doom? By the manly beauty of his person, and the loveliness of his child-like virtues, he has won too large a share in the affections of the venerable patriarch, their father; and for that they envy him. In the honest integrity and fidelity of his young heart, he has brought to the patriarch a report of their misdeeds; and for that they hate him. In the open-hearted candor and simplicity of his unsuspecting boyhood, he has communicated to them all his wonderful dreams; and for that they conspire against his life. At the command of his father, he has come away from home on a mission of filial and fraternal love, to see if it is well with his brothers and their flocks; and now they seize the opportunity to kill him, and see what will become of his dreams. And but for Reuben, death would have closed the scene at once. At his suggestion, deterred from staining their hands with a brother's blood, they put him in a pit to die—all, except Reuben who had better thoughts, consenting in their hearts to the deed, and satisfied, that, whatever may become of him, they have at least defeated his dreams.

And now the scene changes. God, who has great and wonderful ends to accomplish on earth by this earth-imprisoned child, in his providence, has sent along a caravan of Arabian merchantmen, on their way to Egypt, who arrive at the spot just in time to save him, either from death in the cave or from that deliverance which the eldest brother was meditating. Reuben, with his good intentions, is now away; and Judah, partly relenting with natural pity for a brother of his own flesh, and partly urged by a conscience which could not feel quite

guiltless of blood, though none had been shed, proposes to take him out and sell him. And thus, because it was no profit to slay their brother and conceal his blood, avarice takes the place which had been occupied by malice and murder ; and so, compromising the matter between their conscience and their crime, as far as they could, they conclude to sell him as a slave for twenty pieces of silver, little dreaming that all these sinful efforts to defeat the dreams of the boy, and thwart the purposes of heaven, would be the very means of fulfilling them.

Again the scene changes ; from the hill country of Canaan, to the distant land of Egypt ; from a shepherd's tent and a solitary cavern, to a crowded city, and capital, and court, of the greatest kingdom of the times. A captive and an exile, this seed of Abraham, this great-grandson of the "Friend of God," is carried down into Egypt and again sold as a servant to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard. But, by the special blessing of heaven and his own good conduct, he soon finds favor in the eyes of his new master. He is promoted to be overseer of all his house. The sacred narrative tells us, in this connection, that Joseph was, "a goodly person and well favored." Youth has now put on the strength of manhood. The tender, beautiful boy, whom a fond father once loved too well, and whose loss he can never forget, has now ripened into a full grown, active, noble young man. The servant has become the trusted and honored ruler of all his owner's household. And, after some eight or ten weary years of captivity and exile, Divine Providence seems now, at last, about to make compensation to Joseph for all the hardships he had suffered ; when, suddenly, the scene changes again.

In a moment all seems to be lost—forever lost. All his bright prospects are blasted. His good name is cast out as evil, his

reputation gone. The rising sun of his good fortune in Egypt is suddenly and disastrously eclipsed. He is a slave, he is a prisoner, he is now treated as a criminal, he is immured in a dungeon ; it may be for life or it may be for an early death. It was in fact, for more than two years. And why is he there ? He is there through the vengeance of a woman—one whose base wickedness had been baffled, disappointed, and put to shame, by his own inflexible virtue. He is there falsely accused of the very crime which he had manfully and heroically resisted from first to last. He is there to satisfy the wrath of Potiphar's wife, who, to treachery, and falsehood, and slander, and the infamous sin which she wished him to commit, added the cruelty and injustice of suffering an innocent man to languish for years in the state prison of Egypt on her account. We can find bloodier women in Scripture, but it would be hard to find a meaner one than this.

But in Joseph, at the point to which we have now traced him, we behold the young man in his most illustrious character—that of conqueror, that of self-conqueror. We behold him as a sufferer ; but the character of a true moral hero shines out through all his sufferings, like the sun between the clouds in a day of rain. He had illustrated the proverb before it was written, “He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” His virtue had been assailed from day to day by all that was fascinating in the siren song of sensuality, and by all that was powerful and seductive in the persevering energy of an unprincipled woman. But, strong in the fear of God, and in the conscious purity of his own heart and life, he repelled the tempter with the simple and sublime declaration, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?” He might have yielded to the tempter, as too many have done, plead-

ing necessity and the force of circumstances. He might have concealed the sin, saying, in his heart, there is no human eye to penetrate the darkness and discover the crime, and, therefore, no great harm can result from it. But it was enough for him, that it was a violation of the ordinance of God ; enough for him, that there was an all-seeing eye in heaven, in whose sight the darkness shineth as the light. He stood upon that rock of truth, "Thou God seest me," upon which, if a young man stand, he shall be unmoved amid all the blandishments of sensuality, and all the machinations of the devil.

It was a sublime moral triumph of reason over appetite, a conquest of piety over passion, a victory of virtue over vice. We see the young Hebrew, under the most trying circumstances, holding fast the faith of Abraham, successfully vanquishing the greatest temptation of youth, and becoming a model to the young men of all subsequent ages. And what though, in his prison-house, the world may think him fallen? He has fallen, only as the martyr of truth and virtue falls, to rise again.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers."

Several years now roll away, when the scene changes more strangely than ever before. The young Hebrew has found friends, and has enjoyed the blessing of God during all the years of his imprisonment. But now he is brought out from his prison-house, called in haste by a mandate from the throne. At the age of thirty years he stands before Pharaoh. Knowing the purpose for which he was summoned there, we can very easily imagine the keen eye of scrutiny with which he is received by the monarch, and the look of proud contempt and incredulity with which he is regarded by all the hoary-headed magi-

cians and philosophers of Egypt. We can well imagine, too, that, though a stranger and a prisoner, he stands there self-possessed and unintimidated ; because we know he stands not only in the confidence of an innocent man, but in the strength of a wisdom derived from heaven. It is a glorious and triumphant position which he now occupies—that of superior knowledge, that of instructor to the king. It is, perhaps the earliest signal illustration, which history gives us, of our modern maxim “ Knowledge is power.” It was certainly on this occasion the greatest power in Egypt. A poor unknown prisoner comes into that august presence of king and counsellors to reveal the future ; by the interpretation of a dream to make known the decrees of heaven ; and, by his supernatural wisdom alone, he goes out an acknowledged prophet of the Most High, publicly declared to be a saviour and a ruler of all the land of Egypt.

Can the annals of history or romance afford a more remarkable example of sudden exaltation and triumph than this ? Out of the Bible it would be difficult to find a scene on record combining more of the elements of moral beauty and sublimity, than this appearance of Joseph before Pharaoh. How has God himself here vindicated the cause of suffering, down-trodden virtue, in the person of his young servant ! Yesterday, in all the land of Egypt, outside of the prison walls, there was none so poor as to do him reverence. To-day, a grateful nation at the bidding of their king, are ready to bow the knee before him. To-day he hears, and all Egypt hears, this new and marvellous decree from the throne : “ Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall my people be ruled ; only in the throne will I be

greater than thou. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck ; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had : and they cried before him, Bow the knee : and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

Beautifully has the Psalmist celebrated this exaltation of the seed of Jacob :

"The king sent and loosed him ;
Even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his substance,
To bind his princes at his pleasure,
And teach his senators wisdom."

We need not follow him farther, though his subsequent history is full of interesting and affecting scenes. Seven or eight years later, when the famine set in, we should find him holding strange interviews with those brethren who had sold him into bondage, and realizing to the full the prophetic dreams of his childhood. And still farther on, when near the age of forty, and a father then himself, we should see him meeting and embracing the venerable patriarch, who had so long mourned over the supposed tragic fate of his favorite son, and whose aged heart had fainted for joy when he heard the news from Egypt, but revived when he saw the proofs of it, saying, it is enough ; Joseph is yet alive, and I will go and see him before I die." Seventeen years later still, we

should behold him, with his children and his brethren, receiving the dying benedictions of the patriarch, and then going up into Canaan to lay his mortal remains in the cave Machpelah, the burial-place of Abraham. And, last of all, we should see his great and unceasing kindness to his brethren, and hear his own dying prophecy and request for burial in the land of his fathers.

But it is enough for us to have traced his career as a young man. The glory of his youthful character was the decision with which he adhered, through all temptation, to the religion of Jehovah. For twenty years he stood alone in the dark regions of idolatry, the faithful worshiper of the God of Abraham. In the prison and in the palace alike, in his boyhood and in his manly prime, in his private chamber, where no human eye could see him, and under the full gaze of Egypt's royal court and people, he remained firm in his integrity and true to the faith of his fathers. He stood alone in Egypt, not unlike Milton's seraph, Abdiel, among the apostate angels :

“ Faithful found

Among the faithless, faithful only he ;
Among innumerable false unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His love he kept, his loyalty, his zeal :
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth or change his constant mind,
Though single.”

V.—THE YOUTH OF MOSES.

Next on the roll of illustrious young men, whose virtues and achievements adorn the biographical annals of the Bible, we take the example of Moses. His life, of a hundred and twenty years, is naturally divided into three great periods of equal length. The first forty years may be called the period of his youth, all being spent in Egypt ; the next forty years, passed in Midian, made up the period of middle age ; and the third forty, in the wilderness, we may name the period of his old age. Strictly speaking, however, he had no old age in the ordinary sense ; for when he died, at one hundred and twenty, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

If we should comprehend, under our present view, the whole life of Moses, and measure it by the extent of its influence upon mankind, we could find no superior in the annals of time, and, perhaps, but one equal—that of the apostle Paul. As an author, he is not only the earliest of historians, but by far the most voluminous of the sacred writers. As an inspired prophet, his communications with God were more direct and wonderful, than those of any other prophet mentioned in the Bible. As a sacred bard, his song of triumph at the Red Sea, his farewell address to Israel, and his Psalm, the ninetieth, give him a rank amongst the most gifted poetic geniuses that have adorned the walks of sacred literature. As a law-giver and the founder of an empire, whether we consider the nature or the duration of the institutions he established, he stands above Solon or Lycurgus, Numa Pompilius or Augustus, Mohammed or Confucius, Alfred the Great or Napoleon. Though the sceptre of empire has long since crumbled in the dust, his laws and insti-

tutions still live all over Christendom—the oldest and most indestructible in the world. As a military chief and ruler of men, his forty years' march through the wilderness, at the head of some two or three millions of people, displays more executive talent, generalship, and daring, than all the campaigns of Julius Cæsar, or the expeditions of Alexander the Great, or the celebrated retreat of the ten thousand under Xenophon, so beautifully told in the Anabasis. Indeed, for the awful grandeur of his character as an inspired teacher, for the duration of his institutions, for the versatility of his genius, for the extent of his achievements while living, and the influence he exerted on the world when dead, Moses has no compeer in history, and none in the Bible, except the Great Apostle of the gentiles.

But it is not of the deeds of his meridian life, nor of the wonderful events of his advanced age, that we are now to speak. It is in his character and accomplishments as a young man only, that we are now to contemplate him. It was by the discipline of his youth, that heaven prepared him for his subsequent career of glory. No human life ever had three great periods more distinctly marked, and more unlike each other, than his. But we should fail to learn one of its greatest lessons, if we did not perceive, how the first period schooled him for the second, and how the second equipped him for the third. The child is to the man what the man is to the immortal. And the Moses of four-score or of six-score years would not have been what he was to Israel and to the world, had the Moses of twenty and thirty years been a different young man from what we find him.

We pass over all those peculiar circumstances, that attended the infancy of this beautiful child of the ark and the waters, to fix our attention upon three prominent facts, gathered from the

sacred narrative, which determined the character of Moses, and stamped the seal of immortality upon his youth.

The first is, that while educated by his own pious Hebrew mother in the faith of his fathers, he was also educated in the court of Pharaoh, being adopted by the king's daughter as her son ; and, as such, there was before him every prospect of power and glory which the monarchy of Egypt could hold out to the aspirations of a young man. The Scriptures speak of him as having the treasures and the pleasures of Egypt at his command. The inference is almost inevitable, that he was, or would become, heir apparent to the throne. Be that, however, as it may, all Egypt was before him, even if the throne was not ; the memorable example of Joseph's exaltation, power, and glory was before him ; and as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, it is natural to believe, that he had enjoyed greater advantages for a career of honor and usefulness than any young man of his day.

The second fact is, that he had diligently improved these advantages. We are told, that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

His education had been most complete and thorough. A perfect master of the language and learning, both of the Egyptians and Hebrews, he was at once, by his double knowledge, equal to two ordinary men. For it may be laid down as a general rule, which has always held good, that a young man re-duplicates his power and influence with each new language and literature that he masters. In the full possession of all that influence which springs from social rank, and conscious of all that power which comes from a mind full of knowledge, Moses, it seems, had already distinguished himself as a young man by his mighty deeds, and had formed the purpose of

achieving some great work of deliverance for his countrymen as a prince and a judge over them.

But the third fact which distinguished and immortalized Moses, even while a young man, was his remarkable self-denial, his noble choice, his triumph of faith over ambition and worldly glory. With all his stores of wisdom and all his bright visions of worldly grandeur, he voluntarily resigned and renounced his position in the court, and, as Josephus tell us, his office as chief of the armies of Egypt, and took his portion for time and eternity with the afflicted people of God. This is the one act of heroic faith and patriotic self-sacrifice, which the sacred writers have delighted to celebrate as the most illustrious act of his life. And this was the act of his youth—faith's early choice, faith's manly triumph. It takes genius to appreciate genius ; and faith alone can understand and appreciate faith. So we find the greatest of apostles, doubtless moved by the appreciating sympathy of a like faith and a like character, celebrating this act of the greatest of prophets in the following terms : “ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king : for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.”

This sublime triumph of the unseen and eternal over all that was seen and temporal, was the turning point of his destiny, the decisive and irreversible passing of the Rubicon ; but a passage altogether different, in its nature and results, from that which sealed the destiny of Cæsar. Moses gave up all for conscience's

sake, wealth, power, pleasure and fame ; but, by the sacrifice, he won all—immortality on earth and glory in the heavens. Had he staid in Egypt, and become its monarch, mankind would probably have known and cared as little about him as they now know or care about the Pharaohs.

We have seen men, like Napoleon, after braving the summer's heat and winter's cold, after scaling Alps and Apennines, after wading through seas of blood to grasp the crown of empire, at last losing all and dying in exile. We have seen others, like Charies V., or the late emperor of Austria, unrecompensed by all their wealth and royalty, and wearied out with the cares of state, in their old age abdicating a throue which they could no longer fill with credit or comfort, and resigning the sceptre to their feeble and unworthy sons. But, in all the annals of the world's great men, we have found no young man, like Moses, endowed with genius, rich in learning, and conscious of ability, voluntarily relinquishing such a crown, as that which lay within his reach, for such a recompense as that he chose ; and all at the period of life when hope and enthusiasm were beating at the full. We have found many similar examples, ever since the days of Paul, in the annals of the Christian church, in the ranks of its ministry and its missionaries, ancient and modern ; but they have all been men imbued with the same spirit and faith that governed Moses. By this faith and spirit of self-sacrifice for conscience' sake, he stood upon a height of moral heroism and glory far above the kings and conquerors of this world—a height which no young man of Greece, of Macedon, or of Rome, ever attained—a height to which no power on earth can ever raise our fallen human nature, except that Divine power which comes from the principles of the Bible. Would you stand where Moses stood, and

reap the same recompense of reward? Then fling away ambition, fling away selfishness, be willing to lose all for Christ and conscience's sake, even life itself, and you shall not lose your reward.

VI.—SKETCH OF DAVID AND JONATHAN.

Leaving Moses, we now cross another wide interval in the Bible biography of young men. The time would fail us to speak of the youth of Caleb and Joshua, Jephthah and Gideon, Barak and Samson, although the youth of some of them was highly distinguished. But, passing over these, let us fix our attention upon two notable young men, who were contemporaries and companions in arms, and whose deeds of courage, prowess, and patriotism, adorned the long, eventful reign of Saul. They are David and Jonathan.

In them we behold the young man on a new field of action, and in a new character—that of the patriot-soldier and military hero. The relation which existed between these two young soldiers was peculiar and remarkable. No tie of consanguinity bound them. But a tie, woven of the strong cords of sympathy, similarity of character, and admiration for each other's heroic deeds, had bound their hearts in a covenant of affection, and a brotherhood of mutual interest, stronger than the love of woman, and superior to all the calls of selfishness and ambition. Under the circumstances in which they stood to each other and to the kingdom, this friendship was as honorable as it was extraordinary. For Jonathan, as eldest son of Saul, was heir apparent to the throne; whilst David, already anointed as king by Samuel, was claimant of that throne by Divine appointment. Yet they seem never to have thought of

each other as rivals. Nothing could more illustrate the piety and self-sacrificing spirit of Jonathan, than his devotion to the interests of his father on the one hand, and his devotion to the welfare of his friend on the other. He stood between them as a mediator and a preserver ; although, in the view of this world's policy, he had everything to lose, personally, by that mediation. But whilst fighting for his father against the enemies of Israel, and at last dying by his side in battle, so far from having any feelings of envy or ambition towards David, he desired only to see him on the throne, and to occupy a place next to him in the kingdom.

Noble, magnanimous, generous young man! the soul of honor, the pride of thy country ; the living name for valor, patriotism, and chivalry ; the impersonation of every manly and every princely virtue ! And, in all these rare and lofty attributes of character, David, while a young man, was not only a sharer, but an equal. We scarcely know which to admire most—the disinterested generosity of Jonathan in seeking the exaltation of David, or the moderation and magnanimity of David in repeatedly sparing the life of his persecutor, Saul, when he might have cut him off at a blow, and quietly ascended the throne.

Each of these young men had, at an early period of life, performed a feat of daring valor for the deliverance of their country, from which the mightiest champions of Israel had shrunk ; and which at once established their fame as warriors amongst the veterans of the camp, and endeared their names to the people from Dan to Beersheba. Jonathan, with his armor-bearer as his sole companion, had stormed the powerful, and, as it was supposed, impregnable Philistine garrison at Michmash, which resulted in the overthrow of the whole invad-

ing army, and the deliverance of Israel from their oppressors. David, too, alone and but a stripling, on another occasion, had met and vanquished, in the face of the two hostile camps, the proud champion of Gath, who had, from day to day, defied the armies of the living God. By these unparalleled deeds, the two young patriot-volunteers had won the hearts of all their countrymen, and won each other's ardent love for life.

Now the whole world has rung with the renown of the celebrated defence of Leonidas and his band, at the pass of Thermopylæ, which saved Greece from the Persian yoke ; rung with reports of the daring deeds of Alexander and Cæsar, of the personal courage of Napoleon and his marshals on many a hard-fought field ; rung too, with well-merited eclat, for the gallantry and heroism of Nelson, of Decatur, of Lawrence and Perry, on the seas ; but we venture to say, that you cannot find, in any one of these, or in any other, more of the essential characteristics of personal bravery, of daring purpose, of sublime self-immolation on the altar of the public good, more of all those elements, "the bold endeavor and the high emprise, the strength to suffer and the will to serve," which go to make up a real hero, than are to be found in these two exploits of the son of Jesse and the heir of Saul.

By their gallantry on these two memorable occasions, they crushed the power of the invader, inspired the armies of Israel with fresh enthusiasm, and the whole nation with gratitude and joy. So that the veteran soldiers of the camp vied with the daughters of Israel in doing honor to the heroic young men, who had thus, in the hands of Jehovah, become the deliverers of their common country.

In the case of Jonathan, so great a favorite was he with the victorious army, that, when he was doomed to die because of

a vow which his father had rashly made in the heat of battle, we are told : "The people interposed, saying to Saul, 'Shall Jonathan die who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel ? God forbid. As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground ; for he hath wrought with God this day.' So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not." In the case of David, when returning in triumph from the slaughter of the Philistines, so high did the martial enthusiasm of the people run, on account of the great victory whose first blow had been struck by the stone and sling of the shepherd boy, that we are told : "The women came out of all the cities of Israel singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women answered one another as they played and said, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'"

How must the pious, patriotic hearts of these young chieftains, companions in danger and now in triumph, have swelled with thanksgiving to God and visions of coming glory, when, returning from the war, they first caught the notes of high and holy hallelujahs to Jehovah, wafted upon the evening breeze from all the band of Israel's daughters, and then wafted back again from all the echoing hills and waters, perhaps in the very words, forever memorable, of Miriam and her sisters at the Red Sea, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously." It requires no stretch of fancy to mingle with them there, on their long and winding way, now toiling up the hill at the head of their war-worn veterans, all covered with dust, and laden with the spoils of victory ; and now reaching the summit which marks the boundary of home, whence may be heard, amid waving palms and banners, from ten thousand glad voices of mother, sister, and wife, the spirit-stirring words of that sublime chorus :

“Strike the cymbal, roll the timbrel,
Battle is the Lord’s alone.”

“Spread your banners, shout hosannas,
Israel’s God is Lord alone.”

We must, however, leave David and Jonathan. As models of what a patriot-soldier and hero ought to be, they had no equals in that age, and they have had no superiors in any. As such, they are worthy to be studied and imitated by our youth. Jonathan, while yet a young man, fell in defence of his country, as already stated, at his father’s side, in the fatal conflict of Mount Gilboa. When the sad tidings of his death reached David, in a distant part of the land, the young minstrel and brother-warrior touched his harp in sweet and mournful strains, and sung a requiem to the memory of his early and faithful friend in the celebrated lamentation :

“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places ;
How are the mighty fallen !
Tell it not in Gath.
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon ;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

“Ye mountains of Gilboa ! let there be no dew,
Neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings ;
For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away.
The shield of Saul, as of one unanointed with oil,
From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided :
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.

“Ye daughters of Israel! weep over Saul.
Who clothed you in scarlet with other delights,
Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle!
O Jonathan! thou wast slain in thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan.
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me;
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!”

Now we have sometimes tried to imagine what would be the feelings of two such young men as David and Jonathan, if they could come back into the world, and compare experiences with the young men of our own highly civilized generation. Suppose this eighth son of Jesse, the heroic shepherd boy, who was not afraid to beard a lion in his lair, and who had, in fact, slain both a lion and a bear, as well as the giant of Gath, before he was thought old enough to be a soldier; or, suppose this lion-hearted, princely son of Saul could come and stand amongst the boys and young men of our times long enough to see their sports, their pastimes, and their achievements. What would they think of our progress, our vaunted greatness and refinement? What opinion could these earnest, athletic, temperate, God-fearing young men of the olden time form respecting the fashionable young gentleman of our modern cities, whose chief accomplishments are, that he can smoke and swear, drink and gamble, swagger and bet, and fight duels; that he can, after the most approved maxims of the science, dance and flirt with silly women; that he can afford to wear fine clothes, and do nothing; whose most brilliant achievements are his victories in the ball-room, the bowling saloon, or at the card and billiard

table ; and whose only title to fame is the fascination of his fine smile, and voice, and waving hair ? We honor and love the young man who is a man, or is likely to become one ; we hold him in eternal honor ; but if there is anything on earth which we abhor, it is the character of the young fashionable loafer, your cane-bearing, cigar-consuming, professed loafer, who is neither boy nor man, but a compound of both, with very little of either.

Alas ! we fear there is a large and growing class of these in all our great cities, made up from the ranks of the wealthy and the educated, and sometimes even from the families of the church. Who has not marked with sorrow, in every city, those beardless boys with the air of men, who seem to have nothing to do but to lounge about at places of dissipation, and whose words of levity and reckless profanity indicate the character which they have already formed ? Follow them through ten years of city life such as this, and what is the result ? You have a type of character which is produced nowhere else on earth, except in cities and large towns ; you have young men with some of the external, without any of the internal attributes, of the gentleman ; young men, who combine the effeminate appearance of a girl with the ferocious vices of a gladiator ; young men, who, to the morals of a bear, add the manners of a monkey. Aye, we honor the young man ; but it is when there is something of a man in him ; something more, at least, than his clothes and his hair.

What would David and Jonathan, Cyrus and Socrates, Cato and Scipio Africanus, or even our own Franklin, think the race of man was coming to, if they could rise from the dead, and take their stations at the corners of our streets, to see that living stream of elegantly-dressed and ruddy youth, from fifteen

to twenty-five, pouring, at certain hours of the day, into those splendid coffee-houses and gilded palaces of pleasure, in which they are fitted and prepared to pour back again at night into the theatre and gaming-houses, and haunts of vice that crowd the city?—If there is a spectacle on earth that might make heaven weep, it is to see our educated youth, of respectable, Christian families, with the boast of freedom and gentility on their lips, selling their heavenly birthright for worse than a mess of pottage—selling themselves, soul and body, to the debasing, execrable slavery of strong drink ; to see many a promising boy, the hope of a mother's declining age, and many a talented young man, whose stately tread once brought from the dust the sound of liberty, coming at last to lie down in the dirt and mire of a drunkard's grave. O ! is there no power on earth that can arrest the curse ; that can rescue our sons from the horrible doom of drunkenness ; that can save our country from the incubus and the infamy of intemperance ? We see none, except in the strong arm of the law.

VII.—SKETCH OF SAMUEL AND SAUL.

From the youthful David and Jonathan we may go back a little in the order of events, to contemplate two other Bible characters, who, in like manner, were most intimately associated with each other through life, and were at last brought together in death, in a most remarkable manner. These are Samuel the Prophet and King Saul—one the founder of the prophetic order in Israel, the other the first of Jewish monarchs—both leading men in their generation and representative men to all the generations to come, but at the same time as utterly unlike and

repugnant to each other, as they were remarkable for their personal endowments.

In Saul we see a man who could not bear the exaltation of power ; unfit to be a ruler, because he could not rule his own turbulent spirit. Possessing unquestioned courage as a soldier ; blest with a magnificent personal appearance, well befitting a king ; in the words of the Bible, " a choice young man and a goodly ; so that there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he ; from his shoulders and upwards higher than any of the people ;" possessing also an air of modesty, wisdom and virtue, that might have ennobled any private station, he nevertheless, on becoming a king, seemed to lay aside all his good qualities, to abuse all his advantages, and to become by turns, a despot, a fury, a fanatic, a murderer, a demon, and a rebel against God. He lived a wretched life, and at last, fell in battle with the worse than doubtful reputation of a suicide. His dark and turbulent spirit, the seat of every malignant and ferocious passion, stands as a fearful warning on the heights of power to teach us how far iniquity and disobedience may get the mastery over a man, who in his youth seemed to be the special favorite of earth and heaven, and to wear the fair exterior of a servant of the Most High.

In Samuel we behold the very opposite. The noble son of Hannah, growing in favor, both with God and man, stands forth in bold contrast with the degenerate Saul. " All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." His early childhood and youth, baptized with all the hallowed influences of a mother's prayers, dedicated to God amid all the holy ministrations of the public Sanctuary, and adorned with all the virtues that were needful to establish the sacredness of the prophetic office, cast their

lustre forward over his whole subsequent career. "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child girded with a linen ephod." He seems to have been the first child that bore the character of prophet. Such a childhood might well make an honorable manhood and a glorious old age.

In Samuel we trace the beginning of a new order of things among the Jews. He seems to have been the founder of the prophetic office as a permanent institution in Israel : just as he was, by divine direction, the founder of the kingly government. He arose at a time, when the spirit of prophecy, such as it had been in the days of Moses, and of Deborah, had departed from Israel. We are told that the "word of the Lord was precious in those days ; there was no open vision." We have just had occasion to refer to his childhood, but need not repeat the story here. At the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel seems to have become the civil and ecclesiastical head of the nation. He was at once a statesman, jurist, and divine ; the last of the fifteen judges of Israel, the first of that long line of prophets which closed with Malachi, the connecting link between the Theocracy and the Jewish monarchy. Though a Levite by birth, we find him repeatedly offering sacrifice as a priest ; in the administration of public justice travelling as a judge on an annual circuit between Bethel, Mizpeh, Gilgal and Ramah, and sometimes working the most stupendous miracles for the vindication of the cause of God, and the annihilation of the enemies of his country.

But the great office which gave him supremacy over Israel was that of prophet. As such he held a position of higher authority before the people than the king himself whom he had anointed, because he stood as the interpreter of the Divine will. There is a peculiar interest in his long eventful history, beginning as it does

before he was born, and not ending even when he was dead. The circumstances which anticipated his birth seemed to find their counterpart in the strange apparition to Saul which foliowed his death. Few men ever spoke with such kingly authority, and none certainly ever uttered a voice like his from the grave. History tells us of many men of insatiable ambition, who, like the famous Earl of Warwick, have aspired to the glory of making kings and controlling the destinies of states and empires. But here is a man, who without any aspiration or ambition, was the first and greatest of king-makers, setting up one, and putting down another in the name of the Lord and in virtue of his prophetic character.

The longest and most remarkable prophecy delivered by Samuel, is that which describes the manner in which the people should be treated by their kings ; and which, as may be remarked of all kingly governments, was often fulfilled to the letter under the Jewish monarchs. But perhaps the most interesting passage in the life of this great man, is that in which he protests his own integrity as a public officer, when resigning all civil authority and inducting Saul into the kingdom. " And Samuel said unto all Israel. Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now behold, the king walketh before you : and I am old and grey-headed ; and behold my sons are with you ; and I have walked before you from my childhood until this day. Behold, here I am ; witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed : whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith, and I will restore it. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou

taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness."

What a beautiful tribute to the integrity of the man, who through a long life had held the chief place of power, and now, in his old age, voluntarily resigns that authority which he had held so long and wielded so well! Glorious old man! sublime in the simple consciousness of spotless virtue, eloquent at the remembrance that no misdeed had ever marked his public career. We get the idea not only of a venerable prophet, but of an upright judge and patriot; and the name of Samuel will stand forever associated with that peculiar glory of an unsullied ermine, which belongs to Aristides the Just among the Athenians, to Sir Matthew Hale among the English, and to Chief Justice Marshall in our own country.

VIII.—SAUL AND SAMUEL AT ENDOR.

By way of episode, which is itself one of the most striking characteristics of all the Bible history, we may here turn aside to contemplate a most singular transaction, which, though not belonging to our present theme, yet lies fairly in our way, and gives a strange dramatic termination to the history of these two representative men.

The most remarkable event connected with the name of Samuel in the Bible, is that which occurred after his death—his apparition to King Saul in the presence of the Witch of Endor, as narrated in the 28th chapter of the first book of Samuel. On a subject of so much interest to every Bible reader,

and yet of so much difficulty, we would venture, in passing, to make a few remarks. Probably nothing in the Bible has given rise to more learned and laborious discussion amongst critics than the case of the Witch of Endor. Some assuming that the sorceress possessed powers of ventriloquism, have tried to explain all the alleged phenomena of the apparition on that hypothesis. Others have maintained, that the whole thing was a fraud—a gross deception palmed off, on the always excitable and now despairing mind of the king, through a secret understanding between the Witch and Saul's two attendants. Others have admitted all the appearances, as stated, to be real facts ; but ascribe them to a supernatural power possessed by the woman, as one in league with the Devil—real miracles wrought by Satanic agency. Others again, and this we take to be the only true view, hold to the reality of all the appearances, but ascribe them to the miraculous power of God. That is to say, the record is a true history, and no myth, and the main fact, the apparition of the prophet, is a real miracle wrought by the hand of the Almighty.

According to this view, the real prophet Samuel, who, while living, had mourned over the transgressions of Saul and had labored long and faithfully to reform him, and whom all Israel had long ago buried in his quiet tomb at Ramah with deep and heartfelt lamentations, did come back again to this living world to utter one more, and his last, solemn warning. He came not only to tell the guilty monarch of his impending doom, but to reprove him for his last great offence—his treason against that ancient statute of Israel, which, as he knew, “suffered not a witch to live.” We regard the apparition of Samuel as a true miracle of God, intended to enforce a lesson against all idolatrous and heathenish incantations, which the express letter of

the law had hitherto failed to enforce. As such it is no more difficult to receive, than the stopping of the sun, the dividing of the sea, the preservation of Jonah, or any other inexplicable miracle of that miraculous age. For our own part, we never undertake to explain a miracle, by bringing it within the range of natural laws. To us there are no degrees of difficulty about miracles. They are all or nothing. The least requires the power of God ; the greatest claims nothing more. Without God's finger, the least would be absurd and incredible : with it, the greatest and the least are alike possible and alike reasonable.

But that a true prophet of Jehovah should be brought back from the dead, in order to reprove this first anointed king of Israel in the very act of his high-handed violation of the law which he had sworn to administer—that the very man, who had anointed him to fill that exalted place in the Theocracy, which the Lord himself had heretofore filled, should start up, as it were from the ground, to utter his indignant and terrible denunciation upon such high-handed treason, is not stranger, when we consider the relation of the parties, and the greatness of the occasion, than that a dumb beast should be made to lift a warning voice against the madness of Balaam, or that the false prophet himself, in the midst of his divinations, should be constrained to utter blessings instead of curses upon Israel. How is it any more incredible that Samuel should come back into this world, appearing to the senses of Saul and the witch of Endor in the form of a man, and, with the articulate voice of a man, foretelling the events of the morrow, than that Moses and Elias should appear to Christ and his disciples on the mount of transfiguration, and, in their hearing, speak of the approaching death at Jerusalem ? If we find no difficulty in the one

case, where is the exceeding difficulty of the other? As to any question about a real resurrection, or in what bodies they appeared, even setting Elias aside, we can do no more to explain the apparition of Moses on the mount, than that of Samuel at Endor. But if angels often appeared in the form and aspect of men, why is it difficult to conceive of Samuel or Moses, as appearing in their own peculiar form and aspect?

That Samuel did really appear, is evident from the fact, that the sorceress herself was thrown into consternation at the apparition. It is obvious that she expected no such messenger from the grave. She felt that a spirit had come more than she had bargained for—greater than her arts could quell again. She acted as one taken by surprise, and ready to cry out—“Angels and ministers of grace defend us.” That such a minister of justice should start up in her dark abode of guilt, was felt to be a frown from God, as awful as it was unexpected, both upon herself, who as an outlaw was practising, and upon the rebel monarch who was seeking, these incantations of the devil. And what think you, would now be the effect of such an apparition in the midst of a clique of modern dealers in this same ancient craft—your clairvoyants and mesmerizers, your spirit-rappers and pretenders to intercourse with the dead. Suppose, that on some quiet evening, in some private chamber or public hall, where these modern propagators of superstition and folly are met with their dupes, seated face to face around their tables of incantation, in eager expectation of the signs of a familiar spirit—suppose God should utter his voice and work a real miracle—an angel from heaven, or a messenger from the grave should appear—“like gods ascending from the earth.” There shall start forth a venerable form, “an old man covered with a mantle,” and standing revealed to every eye, he shall utter, with up-

lifted finger and unearthly voice, those words of terror—"The Lord is departed from you, and become your enemy,"—how would such a company start from their divinations like the witch of Endor, and feel that the day of doom had come. How would they see "Ichabod," written upon all their vile pretences and ill-gotten gains. How would they, in such an hour, find, like Belshazzar, the "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," of a righteous damnation.

Alas ! for the strength of intellect and the boasted dignity of human nature ! Is it not sad to think, that in these days of light and knowledge, there are still women and men, claiming intelligence and common sense, not to say respectability, who have so far taken leave of their senses as to believe in witchcraft—pretending to hold intercourse with the dead through chairs and tables, brick and mortar—worshiping at a shrine of folly more absurd and degrading than any heathen oracle—worshiping in fact at the shrine of Endor (though under a different name) where Saul met the indignation of an angry prophet and an avenging God ! And with what brazen-faced effrontery do the abettors of these lying wonders parade them before the public, as science—discoveries of science ! There is about as much science in them as there was in the den of the witch of Endor—the science of "old wives' fables," and of men half mad, like Saul. We all know—every man of ordinary intelligence and common sense ought to know—that whatever of fact or reality there may be in the strange phenomena reported by mesmerizers, clairvoyants, rappers and table-movers, can easily be referred to electricity, animal magnetism, or known mechanical agents. And so far these reports are neither new nor inexplicable. All that is true about them has been known long ago, or contains no marvel. The marvels and

the novelties will all turn out to be false. We believe that after a full deduction has been made, first for fraud, and then for fanaticism, there will be next thing to nothing left in the way of real facts, which are so new that they have been unknown to science, and so wonderful that they must, per force, be referred to supernatural causes. Science scouts the whole thing as a silly humbug. Religion frowns upon it as a willful and dangerous delusion. And here lies the danger. The absurd and wicked thing, the insane and dangerous thing, is this claim of supernatural agency—the pretence of intercourse with the dead, and of a revelation from the spiritual world. We have no hesitation in pronouncing such a claim, to be a sham and a delusion—a species of witchcraft as vile and abominable as that of Endor.

Do we judge harshly! We judge by the results, as well as by the established maxims of God's word. By their fruits ye shall know them. What fruit has this tree borne? What good thus far has it done for the world? This whole tribe of reformers have come with the boast of science on their lips. In one form or other they have been at work some fifteen or twenty years. Trace their labors backwards through their various shifting phases of table-moving, spirit-rapping, biology, clairvoyance, mesmerism and phrenology—and tell us, if you can, what single discovery in science, or what useful invention in the fine or mechanic arts, they have all together added to the world during this age, so prolific in great improvements? The only fruits which this tree can claim, as of its own bearing, have been “apples of Sodom and grapes of Gomorrah.” It has led some to suicide, and some to insanity, and many to a total subversion of all religion and virtue. And next to that stupendous imposture, called Mormonism—that vile compound

of licentiousness, ambition, hypocrisy and blasphemy, which is seeking to inaugurate all the vices of savage life upon the throne of civilization, we regard this wide spread revival of Endorism as the most dangerous and degrading delusion of the times.

“Saul,” remarks Gilfillan, “abandoned of heaven must go in his extremity and knock at the door of hell.” It would seem that even yet men sometimes prefer knocking at the door of hell to that of heaven. There was a true prophet in Israel. But Saul would neither hear nor obey his voice. There is a sure word of prophecy in the world now—better than any Jewish Urim and Thummim, or ancient heathen oracle—a revelation from God himself, which tells us all we need to know about the dead and the unseen world. But many forsake the Bible for the unblushing impostures of Mormonism ; and many turn from prophets and apostles, and the son of God who spoke from heaven, to seek for familiar spirits through pots and cups and tables : and thus knock at the door of hell. Everything on earth has had an ancestry, and may boast a succession. We take it, that the men and women who perambulate the country and write books, professing to have communications with the dead, are the legitimate successors of Saul and the Witch of Endor, with this difference, that she staid in her den and wrote no book. In Pollock’s Course of Time are two lines, in two different books, which, if they had stood together, would make no mean example of parallelism, and describe this very case—

“Productive was the world in many things, but most in books.”

“Fertile was earth in many things, not least in fools.”

IX.—THE CHARACTER OF ABSALOM.

Next upon our list of noted Bible characters, appears a personage altogether different from any we have yet contemplated. It is Absalom, the third and most beloved son of King David, with a character somewhat after our modern style. In him, we behold a young man in his farthest extreme from the youthful David and Jonathan. He stands out as an example of selfishness, ambition, and intrigue; the unnatural son, the daring rebel, the unscrupulous usurper. He had the distinction, such as it is, of being the handsomest young man of his generation. "In all Israel," says the sacred writer, "there was no one so much to be praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot, even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him." We do not mention this as any disparagement in itself; for had there been anything else good about him, his fine physical form would have been a blessing. His heroic father, when a young man, as we are told, was a "comely person and of a beautiful countenance." But the outer man seems to have constituted the only point of resemblance between the father and the son. In every trait of character, no two young men of the Bible are more unlike than David and Absalom.

Proud of his royal descent, both on the father's and the mother's side, proud of his splendid personal appearance, he was led by his excessive love of admiration, while yet at an early age, to erect a marble pillar, in the king's dale, to bear his name and perpetuate his precious memory. Too important a character, in his own esteem, to run any risk of being forgotten, he took the matter of posthumous fame in hand early, and, like other mighty ones of the earth, built a monument to tell men

of the son of David, and the grandson of the king of Geshur. Perhaps he suspected, that, without something of the kind, his name would soon perish. He gloried in dress, in chariots, in fine horses, and in equipage. He had fifty men to run before him as he dashed along the streets, through the gates, and over the hills of Jerusalem. He seems, most of all, to have gloried in the exuberance of his hair, probably cultivating it from year to year with all that care with which a farmer would till his fields for the harvest ; for we read, that he “ polled it at the end of the year,” reaping an average crop if he cut it off, or bearing an annual burden, if he only trimmed it, “ of two hundred shekels of the king’s weight,”—some four or five pounds more or less, of hair and ointment together. He was manifestly the leader of the fashion of Jerusalem, and in that field distanced every competitor. A king, in expectation, surrounded already by his admirers and flatterers, he was to the court of David what George IV. was to England in his day—the handsomest man, and at the same time of least account, in all the kingdom. He was evidently the prince of dandies ; the embodiment of a fashionable gentleman of the times ; the very Chesterfield of Jerusalem ; at once the Beau Brummel and the Beau Nash of all Israel.

But he was, withal, a man of some tact and talent. He never could have stolen the hearts of the people from a monarch so beloved as David, and come so near to success in wresting the the sceptre from his hands, had he not possessed something of the adroitness and address of a popular leader. With all his dandyism, he had talents enough to play the demagogue ; and in that he differs from the modern dandy. He is, in fact, the most finished example which the Bible gives us of that modern character—the artful, intriguing, political demagogue. If any

one wishes to study the character at its fountain-head, and is at all curious to see the most ancient portraiture of it in the world, he may find it in this prince of popular idols as he is set forth in the second book of Samuel.

With a bow of recognition to every passer-by ; with a smile of flattery for every rich man, and a kiss of condescension for every poor one ; with soft words of adulation for the great, and honeyed promises of redress for the lowly, he set himself every day in the gates of Jerusalem, as the reformer of abuses, the fast and loving friend of the people, saying : “ O, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice.” The Bible does not so inform us, but it is natural to suppose, that, possessing as he did a fascinating person and an elegant address, he was not a whit behind our modern demagogues ; but understood all their arts of ingratiating himself with the people, and stealing away the hearts of the men of Israel, by first making himself exceedingly polite and agreeable to the women and children.

Feeling himself to be one who was born to command, and superior to his brothers by reason of his royal mother, there was nothing to which he would not stoop in order to conquer. He was the first to play that very common game of modern king-craft—assuming the demagogue for the sake of the despot—willing to be the people’s man in order to be the people’s master. And, with equal grace, he could play the flatterer and the tyrant. Having long since treacherously slain his eldest brother, Amnon, as much, no doubt, from policy with a view to the succession as from revenge for his sister’s injury ; and having waited, probably, till Chileab, the second son, was dead, and being impatient now for that throne to which he was

thus heir apparent, and which the long life of David prevented him from ascending—he devised that memorable conspiracy and rebellion, which you have all read, and which need not now be recited. With all his beauty and his advantages of birth and education, with all his professions of justice and benevolent regard for the people, his career in this unnatural, ungrateful, cruel rebellion, proved him to be a man who could “smile and smile, and be a villain ;” who could steal the “livery of heaven to serve the devil in.”

Think you we judge him harshly ? Read his life again, and study his character well, and you will not think so. What ! judge him harshly, who, after driving from the throne that old, heart-broken father that had loved him so tenderly and forgiven him so much, and, after defiling his father’s household upon the very housetop, in the face of all Jerusalem, by an incest similar to that for which he had killed his brother, could then raise an army, and pursue him in person across the Jordan, determined to be satisfied with nothing short of the patriarch’s blood ? No, no ; it was nothing softer, nothing better than a villain’s heart that beat beneath the fair exterior of such a man ! His history shows how the beautiful and diabolical may sometimes meet in human nature ; how vice as well as poison may be gilded ; how the deadly venom of the viper may lurk beneath a skin radiant with the heavenly hues of the rainbow.

And his tragical end was an appropriate doom for such a life. He fell in that battle in which he expected David to fall. By seeking the life, not less than the throne of his father, he had forfeited his own. And, as if the even-handed justice of heaven would have its perfect work, he fell a victim to his ambition by means of that very personal adornment in which his vanity had so much gloried. There can be no manner of doubt that he was

hung by his hair ; for although we are barely told that he was caught by his head under the thick boughs of a great oak, still had he been thus caught and suspended by anything fastening the neck, he must have been instantly killed, either by the sudden shock or by suffocation, which we know was not the case. The manner of his death has often reminded us of the apostle's words, which, for aught we know, may have been suggested by it : " Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him ?"

The victory, however, which had saved the life of David at the cost of his son's, was one of grief and bitter lamentation to the doting father. For, after all his crimes, Absalom was still the child of his yearning affections ; and there is probably not on record a more striking illustration of parental love, than that such a father should have said of such a son : " O, Absalom ! my son ! my son ! Would to God I had died for thee, my son !" No doubt the keenness of David's anguish arose from the conviction, that he had been himself the cause of his son's ruin. He had committed great crimes in his own domestic relations ; and, although he had repented of them in dust and ashes long ago, they were now, according to the threatened judgments of God, bearing their bitter fruits in the dissensions and premature violent deaths of his children. He felt himself to be under the frown of God in all those calamities ; and justly so, because he knew, as well as we do, that even a man after God's own heart cannot commit great sins without paying great penalties. And as he mourned and wept for this darling child, he doubtless felt that had he been faithful to his marriage relations, faithful to his child, and faithful to God, this dreadful doom would not have overtaken him.

As for Absalom, every one who reads the narrative of his

rebellion must feel that he met the fate which he deserved ; that Joab was right, although in disobedience to the orders of his sovereign, in ridding the world of such a monster. He need not have reared a pillar in the king's dale ; his name will long survive his monument, and stand as a warning to all young men, to tell the sad story of the worst of sons, the prince of demagogues, and the fallen victim of a vaulting ambition.

X.—THE YOUNG MAN AS SOVEREIGN.

But we should weary you to speak in detail of all the prominent young men of the Old Testament. Those that remain to be mentioned, we must pass over with a briefer notice, although as distinguished, and as worthy of our study, as their predecessors. From the whole line of Jewish kings, extending from Saul to Zedekiah, most of whom ascended the throne in early youth, we select, for a passing glance, but two examples, in order to exhibit the young man of the Bible in the character of sovereign. These are Solomon and Josiah. The first was, in some respects, not only the most illustrious of kings, but the most remarkable of men. His name has descended to all ages in a way that no other name has ever equalled, a proverb for wisdom, learning, wealth, and wordly grandeur. And for all these he was most illustrious while as yet a young man. On the shoulders of his tender youth was laid the weight of a great empire, but with it he had the treasured experience of hoary-headed wisdom and philosophy. He was less than twenty years old when he sat down on the throne of David, at a period of profound peace between Israel and all the surrounding nations. And, beyond all comparison, he was the most accomplished mon-

arch in his personal attainments, and the most puissant one in the extent of his influence abroad, that ever sat on David's throne. The queen of the South bowed in homage at his feet ; nor did Israel ever see " a greater than Solomon," save in him who was both " David's Son and Lord," whose kingdom was not of this world.

Blest with all the counsels which such a father as David could give him, endowed with the genius of a poet and the profound reason of a statesman ; crowned with an authority extending from Egypt to the Euphrates ; possessed of all that golden wealth which commerce was bringing him from the Ophir of the East and the Tarshish of the West, and, above all, inspired with a wisdom direct from God, he seems to have had all, and enjoyed all, that Divine Providence could bestow on mortal man, to make him great and happy. And although the meridian of his manhood was darkened by many clouds, and the sun of his old age at last went down in gloom, yet was his early youth a morning of unparalleled brightness and glory.

In the example of Solomon, therefore we behold the young man on the very pinnacle of this world's greatness ; we behold him invested with the largest measure of fortune, fame, and grandeur, that human life admits of ; we behold him like an angel, standing in the sun, but without an angel's strength to stand. Knowing as he did, by sad experience, the perils of such a position, well might his dying father utter that solemn injunction : " Thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind ; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever."

But we cannot follow his history further now. We must leave him there in his tender youth on those heights of glory.

As we turn away, however, dazzled by the excessive light of such a vision, we seem to hear a voice of foreboding, saying of the world, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity ;" we seem to hear the voice of that same man, though no longer the voice of youth, saying to the young men of every land : "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them."

Of the good king Josiah, much more might be said than our present limits will allow. Although his lot was cast in the last degenerate days of the kingdom of Judah, he was imbued with much of the patriotic, heroic, and religious spirit of his great ancestor David. Had the times and the people, and the long-delayed judgments of heaven, permitted it, he might have restored the nation to something of its pristine glory. He is an example amongst many others in history to teach us, that circumstances and great men must work together in order to produce a grand result ; that a really great and noble character may struggle in vain, as to any lasting result, when the great occasion is wanting, when the foundations are destroyed, and the times are all out of joint. Still, for the circumstances surrounding him, he accomplished a great and glorious work. Called to the throne when only eight years old, and distinguished for his piety, even at that early age, he took in hand the work of a radical reform among the people at twelve ; and during a reign of thirty-one years, successfully carried forward the most thorough work of that kind, which had ever been wrought amongst the Jewish people. Fearing God from his childhood, in a period of universal corruption, he had so far infused his own spirit into the nation, and brought them back to the observance of the law of Moses, that, when he **was slain** in

battle in his thirty-ninth year, fighting for his country, he had the distinction of being the best-beloved while living, and the most lamented when dead, of all the Jewish sovereigns. He was to his country what Edward VI. would probably have been to England had he lived as long—a wise king and a good man.

XI.—YOUNG MEN OF THE CAPTIVITY.

In closing our account of the young men of the Old Testament, we have barely time to allude to several, under one group, who lived in the perilous times of the Jewish captivity. In two of them, Jeremiah and Daniel, we see the young man as he appears in the sublime character of a prophet of the Most High. Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office at an unusually tender age ; and, after contributing much to strengthen the hands of his youthful sovereign, Josiah, in his great reformation, he continued to prophesy at Jerusalem during all the years of its decline and fall—until prophecy was exchanged for a book of Lamentations over the doom of his unhappy country. Daniel was only in part contemporaneous with Jeremiah, coming a little later on the stage, and being one of the children of the captivity at Babylon, whilst the weeping prophet, after the fall of Jerusalem, was carried down into Egypt. Daniel's whole career, of alternate adversity and promotion in the land of his exile, bears a very strong resemblance to that of Joseph in Egypt. While yet a young man, he was as much distinguished as an interpreter of dreams, a statesman, and prime minister of the king of Babylon, as he was afterwards for his fearless piety and his prophetic office. These two young servants of Jehovah, Daniel and Jeremiah, though living in distant cities, were

greatly alike in that stern, inflexible energy and intrepidity of character, with which they discharged their respective missions, and braved the wrath of haughty, tyrannical kings on more than one occasion. Jeremiah, though by nature endued with a heart as timid and sensitive as any woman's, was by grace a hero, armed for any work. We never see him alone, in the privacy of his devotions, when he is not weeping, and pouring out his complaints in the ears of Jehovah. And we never see him in public, standing up to utter the vengeance of the Lord against the corrupt kings and princes of Judah, when he does not appear as a man whose face is adamant, and whose nerve is iron. He was frequently imprisoned, and once immured in a deep, dark dungeon, where he expected soon to perish in the mire.

And so Daniel, rather than swerve a hair's breath from the line of duty and allegiance to the God of his youth, did not fear the wrath of all his enemies, nor shrink from the terror of a lion's den. The world has loved to celebrate the noble daring of its apostles of liberty, its champions for the rights of man, its Tells and Savonarolas, its Hampdens and Sidneys, its Wallaces and Russells, its Husses and Jeromes ; but the world has beheld no finer examples of heroic moral courage for truth and right, and conscience sake, than those which were exhibited so long ago in Jeremiah's dungeon and Daniel's night with the lions. In the midst of surrounding wickedness, and in the face of danger and death, they stood up heroically as witnesses for God ; ready, if need be, to seal their testimony with their blood ; ready, by a death of martyrdom, to vindicate a life devoted to the cause of the true God.

They stood not alone, however, even in those degenerate days. We find a parallel case in three other young men of the cap-

tivity—Daniel's companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, whose faith, like pure gold, stood the test of the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. For daring all and suffering all in defence of the true religion, these three children of the captivity, although they escaped death, are well worthy of a place in the noble army of martyrs. Along with Daniel, they had been promoted by the king, and placed in authority over the provinces of Babylon ; but rather than yield to a decree requiring them to abjure their religion, by worshiping an idolatrous image which he had set up in the plain of Dura, they were willing to lose, not only their posts of honor, but their lives. Persisting in their refusal, they were thrust into the "fiery furnace, heated seven-fold ;" and thus appealing from man's judgment to God's they were miraculously delivered by "One like unto the Son of God," walking with them in the midst of the flames.

In their example, we have an early and sublime illustration of the way in which men must obey God rather than man, when human laws come in collision with the Divine ; not by taking the sword of resistance, but by firmly standing to their principles, and leaving the result to God ; not by rising in rebellion against the "powers that be," but by standing ready, like Paul, both to suffer and to die for the sake of their religion. The principle was gloriously illustrated in the history of all the apostles, as it had been in the life and death of their Master. It has been illustrated on every page of the book of Christian martyrology. The persecuted witnesses of the truth in every land—the heroic confessors, and reformers, and non-conformists of the church, from Paul to Wickliffe, and from Wickliffe to the present-hour—have only acted out this great Protestant principle, which was so early and so signally vindicated on the plain of Dura, by Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-

nego—to obey God rather than man, to suffer all rather than betray the truth. It is the opposite of that cowardly, time-serving, Erastian spirit, which, under cover of loyalty to the state, would sell the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver ; whose first principle is to hold fast to its living and let its religion go. It is the opposite of the weather-cock spirit of the notorious vicar of Bray, who, during the civil commotions of the English reformation, was twice a Papist and twice a Protestant, and when charged with his inconsistency, replied, “It is not so ; I always keep to my principle, which is, To live and die vicar of Bray.”

XII.—THE YOUNG MEN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We cannot dwell, at any length, upon the character of the young men of the New Testament. The completeness of our subject, however, demands, that they should not be omitted altogether. In order to have before us a sort of panoramic view of the young men of the whole Bible history, it will be sufficient barely to mention a few of the most memorable examples of the New Testament, whose names and characters are already so familiar to the young, as not to need anything like descriptive delineation, except so far as to indicate that rank and dignity which they hold in the annals of human greatness.

Prominent on the pages of the Gospel history, and marked by every eye, there stand forth two young men bearing the same name, though greatly dissimilar both as to character, and as to outward appearance—John the Baptist, and John the Evangelist. Called in early life to the great mission of the gospel of God—called to bear an active part in that great work for which the young men and the old men, of all preceding generations had

been preparing the way—and endued with grace and wisdom from on high, they were destined, each in his own peculiar sphere and office, to exert an influence on all posterity, by the introduction and establishment of Christianity, as the religion which must ultimately conquer the world. So far as we can ascertain, they were each about thirty years of age, when they appeared upon the great stage of actual conflict for God and the gospel. The one, coming in the spirit and power of Elias—clad indeed in the rough garb and wearing the austere aspect of that greatest of all the ancient prophets—emerges from the wilderness, where he had spent the riper years of his youth in communion with nature and with God, and as the forerunner of the great Messiah, stands on the banks of Jordan and utters, in the hearing of the ten thousands of Israel there assembled, that long predicted voice—“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; prepare ye the way of the Lord.” The other, early called into the family of Jesus, where he is accustomed to lean upon the Master’s bosom, and where doubtless his early attainments in grace and purity, had won for him the title of “beloved disciple,” although probably the youngest of the apostolic band, stands forth with all the ardor and energy of youth to fulfill the high commission—“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” The one, as the last and greatest of all the prophets—a burning and a shining light—ushered in the morning of Zion’s glory, and then passed away. His work was great and soon done. His fidelity and zeal won for him an early grave and a martyr’s crown. The other, as the last and most blest of all the apostles, was permitted first to close the evangelical record, and then, by his wonderful apocalypse, to close the canon of inspiration—tarrying on earth long enough to see that cause, in which he had spent his

years, both of youth and manhood, established amongst all nations.

Shall we mention other examples? In Timothy, who had known the Scriptures from his childhood, we behold, as it were the connecting link between the young men of ancient and of modern times. In him as a faithful soldier of the cross, as a preacher of the gospel of peace, and as a pastor in the church of Christ, the young ministers of all subsequent times, have found an admirable exemplar for their own instruction and encouragement. Through the inspired directions given to him, many a youthful herald of the cross has learned, so to temper a burning enthusiasm with the wisdom of age, as practically to verify the precept of the great apostle—"Let no man despise thy youth." And of that apostle himself, what shall we now say? What might we not say of Paul, as a young man! of Paul, the Hebrew of the Hebrews, the disciple of Gamaliel, the young persecutor, the young convert to the faith of Jesus—sacrificing all his prospects of wordly glory, and bringing all his learning, all his energies, all his eloquence, to defend and to propagate the cause of the crucified Nazarene! But it is enough, at present, barely to mention his name, and with it, to close our list.

From the rapid and extensive survey which we have now taken of the broad fields of Scripture biography, you see what distinguished honor God has, from the beginning, conferred upon young men, in carrying forward the grand interests of his kingdom in this world. You have seen what responsibilities they have borne, what achievements they have made, what destinies they have fulfilled, in the great drama of human history, during its first forty centuries. And the part performed by the young men of the Bible, was but a type of what has been

done by young men in all subsequent ages. In every field of discovery and achievement, many of the greatest and most enduring works which have been accomplished on earth, have been begun and often finished, by men, before they had reached the meridian of life. This is as true of the evil, as of the good. The history of the world—the history of the church—nay, the history of redemption itself, in an important sense, has been written in the lives of young men. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that the greatest amount, both of evil and of good, which all men have done, they have done while they were yet young and strong. This, we know is true of many of the most remarkable characters in history. Lafayette, in his very boyhood, volunteered to fight the battles of America, and before he was twenty-five, had won the confidence of Washington the admiration of the world, and a name forever embalmed in the memories of a free people. Alexander the Great had conquered the old world, and laid the foundations of the third great empire of antiquity, before he had reached the age of thirty-three. At a similar age, Scipio Africanus, the noblest of all the Romans, had carried the war of his country into Africa, and had won the prize of victory over the veteran, and, till then, invincible Hannibal. Napoleon had fought his most brilliant battles, formed his grand schemes of universal empire, and filled the world with his fame, before he was twenty-nine. Luther had kindled the fires of the great Reformation before he was thirty-five; and Calvin, deducing a finished system of theology from the Scriptures, had published his immortal “Institutes,” before he was twenty-seven. The younger Pitt was prime minister of Great Britain in his twenty-third year; and before he was thirty, stood preëminent amongst the statesmen of Europe. Henry Martyn, leaving the halls of science

and honorable preferment at home to preach Christ to the perishing, with heroic self-sacrificing toil, completed a translation of the New Testament into two languages of the East, and fell a martyr to the work at the age of thirty-one. Whitefield and Summerfield were each immortal at twenty-five, having filled both hemispheres with the fame of an eloquence and success in preaching the gospel, which had not been surpassed since the days of the apostles. Our own great statesmen, the three American maguates of this nineteenth century, Webster, Clay and Calhoun, had, each before the age of thirty, won such triumphs of eloquence at the bar and on the forum, as led men to predict that meridian of splendor and old age of glory, which they lived to verify. And when did the world ever behold a more splendid combination of all the rare and glorious attributes that make the young man immortal, than it has just witnessed in our countryman, Dr. Kane, who, before he was thirty-three, had trodden the most inaccessible parts of our planet, and at thirty-five returned to die a martyr to the boldest attempt that science and humanity ever made to reach the pole and save the lost !

Such then is the glory, such the responsibility, to which God by the voice of his providence, and by all the voices of past history, calls the young men of this generation. But to conclude, and to recapitulate : we have now contemplated the young man of the Bible, as one of the most remarkable, the most instructive and attractive features of the book. We have seen him in all his shades of character, and fortune. We have marked him first in the person of Adam, coming forth as lord of a new world, in the glorious image of his Divine Author. We have seen him, a little after, sealed as the first of martyrs in Abel, and branded as the first of murderers in Cain. We have seen him next,

under the inspiration and the wonder-working providence of God, becoming, in Joseph, the deliverer and the mighty ruler of the land of Egypt. We have gazed upon the moral grandeur of his character in Moses, as that of a self-denying and yet triumphant believer in the unseen, the eternal, the Divine. We have followed him next through the din of battle, and admired the lofty bearing of the patriot soldier, and the invincible, God-fearing hero, in the youthful David and Jonathan. We have soon after read the wretched doom of Absalom, and learned from him, what a young man is, when he becomes a rebel son, a demagogue and usurper, a votary of vanity and a victim of ambition. Then again, we have seen the young man as sovereign, standing on the perilous heights of hereditary power, combining the character of poet, preacher, philosopher and statesman, in the full-orbed glory of Solomon, or that of civil and religious reformer in the young and much lamented King Josiah. Still further on, amid the terrors of a dungeon, a lion's den, and a fiery furnace, we have looked upon the young man as he appears in Daniel and Jeremiah, arrayed in the stern and awful grandeur of a prophet of God, or in the three children of the captivity, as the uncompromising confessor, witness and defender of the true religion. Later still, in John the Baptist, we have heard the young man from the wilderness, in that sublime voice, which seemed to concentrate all the prophetic voices of the past in one, calling men to flee from the wrath to come, and to "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." And the last of all, in the seraphic St. John, in the admirable Timothy, and in the indefatigable and incomparable Paul, we have found the young man, under a new and nobler dispensation of light and of love, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation, in the name of Jesus, to the perishing nations of the whole world.

And now, if anything more were needed to place the crown of immortal glory upon the brow of youth, it is the fact, that Jesus was himself a young man, and that, by dying and rising again, as such, he remains a young man forever. The incarnate son of God, before he was thirty-four, had fulfilled his great mission on earth, finished his grand work of atonement and salvation, won all his triumphs over death and hell, unbarred the prison of the grave, glorified God, and purchased immortality for man—and had done all in the character of a young man. As such the first Adam had fallen and lost all. It was fit then, that the second Adam, while yet in the dew of youth, should stand for us, and restore the ruins of the first. And it is a pleasing thought, that in the person of Jesus, the inhabitants of heaven now behold, not only the restoration of our human nature from the ruins of the fall, but its exaltation and apotheosis in a state of immortal youth.

These things the angels desire to look into. And into these things the nations of the earth will desire to look more and more, Christ is already the central object of all history, and all human thought. It is the name which thrills most deeply through the great heart of the world—which absorbs its daily activities, and its midnight meditations, as no other name has ever done before. Be the field of discussion what it may, be the writers or speakers who they may—atheist or infidel, deist or skeptic, rationalist or Christian—the all-absorbing theme is still the same, the one ceaseless thought is about Christ. The officers of the Jewish Sanhedrim unconsciously uttered a great prophecy as well as a great truth when they said, “Never man spake like this man.” For whether he spoke divinely or humanly, in words wisdom or of fable, as a Jewish Rabbi or as the son of God, one thing is certain, he so spoke that the world has never ceased

to speak of him, and never can. Even the infidels and rationalists of these modern times, from Spinoza down to Strauss, by every volume which they have published, and every effort they have made to crush his cause, have only fulfilled the prophecy and added fresh confirmation to that ancient record, that no man ever spoke like Jesus. Such herculean efforts, made from generation to generation, and still renewed after eighteen hundred years of defeat, to prove him a common man, and his religion but a dream, by the very intensity of their zeal, recoil and refute themselves ; for they, if nothing else, bear witness, that he was no common man, and that his religion is one of the strongest vitalities in the world. The wider and stronger the opposition, the stronger and clearer is the proof, that the young Nazarene, though leaving the world after a few brief years of public teaching, had nevertheless so lived, so spoken, and so died, that all the world, infidelity not excepted, has heard his voice and felt his power. By a public ministry of three years spent in toil and privation, and ending in a death which the world regarded as his complete and everlasting overthrow, he produced effects upon the world, greater and more enduring than any other man, public or private, old or young, ever produced. So that from the lowest conceded facts of his life, regarded simply as a history, it is impossible to turn away without believing the truth of his doctrine as a theology. Admit the plain facts of his manhood, and there is no escape from the logical conviction of his Godhead. The only solution of such a Son of man, is in the conception of such a Son of God. Admit the "Christ of History," as the point has been well argued by a recent author, and you admit all that the Christ of Revelation ever claimed to be.

CHAPTER VII.

SCIENCE AND THE SAGES OF THE BIBLE.

Relations and Bearings of the Subject—The Moral Science of the Bible—The Bible on Physical Science—First Scientific Characteristic—Second Characteristic—Third Characteristic—Additional Illustrations—The Sages of the Bible.

I.—RELATIONS AND BEARINGS OF THE SUBJECT.

No apology we trust, will be demanded for selecting the Science and Sages of the Bible, as a topic entitled to stand amongst those which have already claimed our attention in these pages. Some, perhaps, may be ready to ask at first, what good can come out of such a subject—so narrow in its range, so barren in all its aspects, so unattractive in its very announcement? The Bible, it is freely admitted, is not a scientific book in any ordinary sense. Whatever may be its claims to literature, it does not profess to teach the natural sciences; it is not received as an authority in the scientific world; nor do its writers, anywhere, lay claim to the title of philosopher or sage.

It does, indeed, sometimes speak of science, and of the Grecian philosophers: but it is only to put us on our guard against the babblings of a vain philosophy, and the oppositions of a science falsely so called. It is evident at a glance, that the book of God was not inspired for the purpose of being a

text book of natural science. It was not given as a history of the wonderful phenomena of the material universe, but as a revelation of man's origin, relations, duties and destiny. But still, our theme, whether barren or fruitful in itself considered, when viewed in all its relations and bearings, becomes one of attractive interest to all those who wish to know, not only what the Bible has said, but especially what it has not said, about science and philosophy. We deem it of essential importance to all the lovers of truth, and especially to our educated youth who will soon be called to guide the opinions of others, that the line which defines the true relations between science and the Bible, should be distinctly drawn and clearly understood.—It is our object to aid in pointing out the landmarks of that important boundary. It has been well remarked by one of our scientific men, that the subject may be presented in such a way as to “impart instruction, remove difficulties from the minds of the scrupulous, and deepen the convictions of religious truth ; but on the other hand, it is easy so to exhibit it as to excite bigotry and prejudice, alarm the conscientious and do injury both to science and religion.” Obviously it is a subject of profound interest alike to the scientific, the literary and the religious man.

It may be claimed for the Bible, that in the broadest sense, it is a book of learning, as learning existed in the ancient world. It comes down to us, laden with the rich stores of ancient oriental wisdom—the treasured lore of the first forty centuries of human history. It tells us of men, like Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and Solomon filling the world with the fame of his intellectual greatness. It tells of Eastern sages, like Daniel, “skillful in Chaldean wisdom, cunning in knowledge, understanding science,” and of Western

scholars like Paul, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and versed in all Rabbinical and Grecian literature.

And although it has given no clue to scientific discovery, and shed no light upon the brilliant pathway of our modern science, in her explorations of material nature ; still, it has not been without its influence in stimulating and directing the progress of the modern scientific world. Although the Bible has had no mission to teach philosophy how to cast her measuring lines into the sea, or sink her shafts into the heart of the earth, or stretch her telescopes through the untrodden fields of space ; nevertheless it has been a book of intense and undying interest to the most scientific minds, not only because it contains the Divine wisdom and Eternal life, but because of the peculiar and wonderful relations which it sustains to science in general and to the spirit of scientific discovery in particular. In its general tone and spirit everywhere encouraging scientific investigation, and yet nowhere pointing the way to scientific discovery ; everywhere, speaking freely and fully of the diversified phenomena of the earth and heavens, yet nowhere explaining anything or professing to teach anything on such subjects ; it has, in fact, so adjusted itself, from the beginning, to each advancement in science, that it would seem to have anticipated all its discoveries ; and so far from having received any damage from all these new worlds of wonder which it has itself evoked from the vast deep of things unknown, the Bible has only awakened additional interest in its own revelations, and gained fresh confirmation for its own claims from every realm of living nature, and every department of the known universe.

Its language has adjusted itself to the vocabulary of universal science, in precisely the same way that its prophecy has adjusted itself to the facts of universal history. The history

of the world has furnished a thousand opportunities of refuting the prophecies of Scripture, had its prophecies been false. Even so, the discoveries of modern science have furnished innumerable opportunities for disproving the alleged facts of Scripture, had these facts been unfounded. That the Bible should have maintained its ground so long and so well, under the searching analysis and concentrated light of our modern inductive philosophy, will appear all the more wonderful when we consider how all other ancient books of religion, and schools of philosophy, and systems of mythology, and anthropology, have given way before it like the stars of night before the morning sun. How long could the Shasters of India, or the astrologies of Egypt, the hoary religious system of China, or the astronomy of Ptolemy, the cosmology of the intellectual Greeks and Romans, or even the partly borrowed Koran of Mohammed, stand before the light of our modern astronomy? But the Bible has been standing before it, ever since the days of Copernicus and Galileo, and still stands in the meridian of its light as little dimmed or daunted by its brightness, as the eye of the eagle by the sun.

“Hitherto,” says Gilfillan, “the result of all new discoveries has been, to dart new notice, new light, new interest, upon the pages of this marvelous book, which, like the full moon, shines undimmed, whatever stars come up the midnight. In her majestic simplicity, she fears no rival among all those new telescopic orbs which are arriving every hour, and can suffer no eclipse from them ; and neither need the Bible, in its pure, mild, and crystal sphere, be alarmed at all the starry revelations of science.” No, the Bible has no more to fear from science, than science has to fear from the Bible. Why should either have anything to fear from the other ? Are they not both revelations,

though written in different books, of the same infinitely wise and perfect God? And must not the true teachings of God in the volume of his works, be always harmonious with the true teachings of God in the volume of his words? There can be no greater absurdity than to say that true science can ever come into real conflict with any true interpretation of the Bible; for it is just equivalent to saying, that God can contradict himself.

No; let all such fears be buried with the theologians of Galileo's times, who thought, that if the earth moved, the Bible must fall; and that to prevent so great a catastrophe, they must stop the mouth of the philosopher, by imprisonment or death. Poor way that to stop the earth from moving or the Bible from falling! True science and true theology are friends; and they may well afford to be fast friends now, in the day of their triumph, for they have gone hand in hand, through many a day of peril in their past history. They point upward to the same great Author, and onward to the same destiny of perfect knowledge. Ever since the Bible has had a fair foothold amongst men, all the science in the world that has been worthy of the name, has been found closely clustering around it, and ready to make common cause in its defence. Modern heathenism has produced no true science in any department. The ancient classical nations produced very little that outlived their downfall. Mohammedanism has added nothing to the stock, that may not be traced to the Bible. All that the barren soil of infidelity and atheism has ever produced, has been produced under the fostering influences of the Bible. Historically, it is a most important and significant fact that the Bible, so long as it has stood at all, has been standing at the head of the science of the world; and science has made no advancement anywhere on earth without this book. All our

modern physical sciences, which have sprung up under the inductive method of the Baconian philosophy, owe their existence to that spirit of free inquiry which the Bible created among the nations of Europe about the beginning of the sixteenth century. They are all daughters of the Great Reformation, as that is of the Bible. And in return, the religion of the Bible owes to modern science, her first-born, fairest child, an eternal debt of gratitude for the noblest vindication of her own celestial origin, that has ever been made for her since the age of miracles. For modern science to assail the Bible, is as if the child should lift an ungrateful hand against the mother that had nursed its infancy. And for the Bible to assail science, is but for the mother to turn against the daughter who bears her image, and has done her most honor in the eyes of all mankind.

II.—THE MORAL SCIENCE OF THE BIBLE.

But in what sense is the Bible a scientific book, and what do we mean when we speak of the science of the Bible? In a general sense, all our knowledge of truth, of whatever kind, even historical, is sometimes called science. And in that sense, the Bible being all true, might be said to be full of science. But this is not the usual meaning of the word. Strictly and properly speaking, the term science is applied only to that part of our knowledge which has been systematized; whose facts and principles have been classified and arranged in a definite order, by the process of the inductive philosophy. And in this sense, it is obvious, that the Bible is not, and was not intended to be, a scientific book.

At this point, however, we meet with an important distinction

arising out of the very nature of the sciences. If we look at the whole circle of the sciences, we shall find, that they may all be arranged under two grand divisions, in reference to the two distinct fields of human inquiry, the moral, or spiritual sciences on the one hand, and the physical or natural sciences on the other, corresponding somewhat to the ancient distinction of physics and metaphysics. Now, to one of these departments the Bible holds a very different relation from that which it holds to the other. In the one, it has scarcely spoken at all, and does not claim to be a teacher. In the other, it has spoken, fully, earnestly, and with all the authority of a teacher come from God ; but never even here, in a scientific form, never in the language of the schools.

On the subject of the natural or physical sciences, which constitute the peculiar glory of our modern philosophy, and whose domain lies in the material universe, the Bible is almost silent, giving us neither the materials nor the forms of a complete science—giving some of its facts, but none of its theories. But on all those branches of knowledge, in which classical antiquity gloried most, and gloried in vain, whose domain lies in the unseen world of thought—the spiritual, immaterial universe relating to God, to the nature of truth and virtue, to the nature of man, as a social, moral, intellectual and immortal being—on all these, the Bible has spoken clearly and abundantly, giving us all the materials of the science of God and man, but not in a scientific form—giving us the essential facts, without the theory, of all moral science.

Whilst, then, we might search in vain, through the Bible, for any systematic science, such as we find in our books of chemistry or physics, still we may find there the elements of the very highest science. We find indeed all the fundamental

facts and principles of, at least, four of the most important branches of universal science. These are revealed on the sacred pages, just as the true system of astronomy was revealed on the face of the sky before the days of Copernicus, and chemistry on all the objects of nature, long before the days of the alchemists. True science, you know, may exist in its elements, long before there is any scientific eye to read it aright, or reduce those elements to scientific order.

First, we have the sublime science of God himself, in all his perfections, in all his relations to all creatures ; which we call the science of Theology, the grand centre of universal science.

Secondly, we have the great science of moral truth and virtue, of right and wrong in their relation to human duty, which embraces the broad field of Ethics, or Moral Philosophy.

Thirdly, we have the science of the soul itself, the human mind in its relation to truth and virtue, which is known by the terms, Psychology, Mental Philosophy, or Metaphysics in general.

Fourthly, we have the science of law and government, the august and noble science of man collectively—man as a social being and a citizen ; which may be called Jurisprudence, Political Economy, or Legislative science ; which has been thus beautifully personified by Hooker : “ Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least, as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in a different sort and name, yet all with one uniform consent, admire her as the mother of their peace and joy.”

Now these four great branches of human knowledge, which agree in this, that they are all founded upon moral evidence,

and all relate more or less to moral truth, are as justly entitled to be called scientific, and constitute in fact, as regular sciences, as any of those branches which we call natural or physical. Theology is as truly a science as chemistry, and Ethics as geology. And all of these great sciences of God and the soul, of truth and duty, are written in the Bible, just as the physical sciences are written in the great volume of nature. Upon all these vast and important fields of scientific inquiry, the word of God has shed a truer and a brighter light than all other books, and oracles, and schools of philosophy, of ancient or modern times. In speaking of the science of the Bible, therefore, we must ever bear in mind, that whatever of scientific truth it contains, is found there, not in logical classified forms, but in its original essential elements ; not as geology and astronomy are found in the text-books of the schools, but as geology and astronomy are found in the field-books of the earth and heavens. We gather up these facts and principles, these scattered materials of science, and apply to them the process of interpretation, classification, and inductive reasoning, and thus educe the grand sciences of Theology, Ethics, Psychology, and Civil Jurisprudence. The method by which this is done, is as truly Baconian, and the result of it as truly scientific, as that which was pursued by Newton in the "Principia," or La Place in the "Mécanique Céleste," or Humboldt in the "Cosmos."

• In these four kindred branches of universal science, Theological, Ethical, Psychological, and Legislative, the Bible has been the great text-book and storehouse to all modern nations. It has not only supplanted all the systems of antiquity, but it has successfully driven every opposing modern system from the field, and now it reigns without a rival over the whole realm of Christendom.

The Mosaic code, modified by the new law of the gospel, is the basis of all the jurisprudence and legislation of the present civilized world. And except in the departments of commercial, maritime, and international law, which, from the peculiar character of the Hebrew Commonwealth, had not been contemplated in the Mosaic code, the world has not added much to its original stock, nor much improved on its Scripture model. In theology, the science of the Supreme Being, there is, of course, no other authority known to civilized nations, but the Bible. For even what is called Natural Theology, was a great deep of darkness and confusion, until this surer word of revelation came, to call light out of darkness, and order out of chaos. The same is true of all moral or ethical science. Our existing books and systems, so far as they have any claim to scientific truth, are all founded upon the Sacred Scriptures. And as to Psychology, or the philosophy of the human mind, it is obvious that, whilst all the ancient writers have sunk into oblivion, all the modern, from Locke to the present day, have ended very nearly at the point where they began, and that is just where the Bible left the subject so long ago.

By this, we do not mean to say that the Bible has anywhere given us a treatise on the human understanding, as Locke and Reid, Stewart and Cousin, have done ; but only that the Bible has furnished the best materials for this and other kindred sciences : first, because the Bible, being inspired of God for the purpose, has had a deeper insight into human nature than any other oracle, and has given us the truest, fullest representation of man in all his moods, and of man's mind in all its exercises, which the world has yet seen. It was to be expected that a book from God and a book on the soul, would tell us **most**, both about God and the soul.

The Bible has held the mirror up to nature with an infallible and unsparing hand, and has reflected back to us a true image of ourselves, which we may study at our leisure ; just as we might study the same thing in Shakspeare. And this will serve to illustrate our meaning. Who does not know that a very good and true, and even full, philosophy of the human mind might be educed from the writings of the bard of Avon ? Why so ? Because he too held the mirror up to nature, long enough and steadily enough, to catch a true picture of the workings of the soul, in all its moods and exercises. Even so, but infinitely better, is the true philosophy of the whole inner man revealed to us in the perfect mirror of God's word, not as a science, but as the constituent elements of science.

In this grand department, then, of the moral or spiritual sciences, we claim for the Bible, and it is a claim which we trust you are fully prepared to indorse, that it has given us the only true and perfect theology in the world ; that it has given us the only safe and solid foundation for virtue and ethical philosophy ; that instructing us as to the origin, nature, aim, and destiny of the soul, it has given us the only sure and settled psychology ; and that, coming with authority from God, and the sanctions of a future state, it has unfolded all the great fundamental principles of human government, legislation and jurisprudence.

III.—THE BIBLE ON PHYSICAL SCIENCE—FIRST CHARACTERISTIC.

But leaving now these broad fields of science, to the cultivation of which the Bible has contributed so much, let us pass to the contemplation of those for which directly it has done so lit-

tle. Let us consider the relation in which the Bible stands to the physical sciences, which constitute the peculiar glory of our modern philosophy. It is in this direction, that the genius of the age in which we live is bending all its steps, and taxing all its mighty energies. And it is in this quarter, if anywhere, that the respective friends of science and the Bible, are in danger of misunderstanding and collision. Here, on the field of material nature, where science now seems to be the strongest, and the most confident of her strength, some, perhaps, without due reflection, might be ready to think the Bible will be found weakest and most vulnerable. And truly, for every educated man, we know not a subject of wider interest, and greater practical importance, than the clearing up of this relation, between the Bible and physical science. Let us now endeavor to point out some of the distinctive landmarks.

And here, the first fact that arrests attention, is the remarkable reticency of the Bible on the whole subject of physical science—its dignified reserve and taciturnity—its forbearance to philosophize—its profound, and, as we may say, most impressive silence, on all the questions and theories of natural science.

The wonder is not that the sacred writers have given us nothing as to the true theory of the universe ; for that they could not know without a special revelation, and it was no part of Divine inspiration to reveal it ; but the surpassing wonder is, that they should have abstained from giving us any thing that is false—abstained from giving any theory at all.

For whilst they were writing the Bible, the world was full of all sorts of systems and philosophies ; full of magicians and astrologers and theorizers about the heavens and the earth ; full of cosmogonists, and fabled oracles, and pretended divinities, peopling all the woods, and fields, and waters. And yet,

the sacred writers have steered their way through all these wonders of the times, and have not in a single line, committed themselves to one of the multiplied absurdities, that crowd all other contemporaneous writings. Amidst all these sophists and idolaters they stood, and wrote their sublime history, in such a way, that the pure current of their narrative rolled on, from beginning to end, uncontaminated by any of the systems of four thousand years.

This too they have done, while speaking freely and fully, on all the diversified facts and phenomena of universal nature, as known to the ancients. But nowhere upon their pages is a single theory discussed, or even propounded, as to any part of the material universe ; and so profound and unbroken is this silence, that although men have been searching these pages for many centuries with the closest scrutiny, yet we are not aware that any line of them has ever led to the first scientific discovery on the one hand, or involved a single scientific blunder on the other.

Nothing can well be more wonderful than this. When we consider with what fullness and minuteness of detail, the Bible has described the chief objects of material nature, animate and inanimate, throughout the vast domain of the vegetable, animal, mineral and atmospheric kingdoms—how freely and how frequently it has spoken of earth, air, water and fire—how it has spoken of the origin of the earth and heavens, the sun, moon, and stars, the thunder and lightning, heat and cold, day and night, summer and winter—how it has spoken of the tribes of men, the beasts of the forest, the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, the plants of the field—spoken of everything that hath, and everything that hath not, breath—when we consider all this, must it not appear infinitely remarkable, that

the sacred book has never committed itself to any of the ten thousand absurdities of antiquity, nor advanced a single philosophical dogma, which modern science has exploded ?

“The Hebrew language,” as used in the Old Testament, says Herder, “contains more than two hundred and fifty distinct botanical terms.” And yet the Bible does not teach any system of Botany. It gives us no system of Astronomy, and yet it is constantly speaking of the heavenly bodies, from the sun shining in his strength, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, to the faintest star that peepeth through the eyelids of the evening twilight. It treats not of animal Physiology, and yet it describes the varied parts and functions of our “fearfully and wonderfully made” animal frame, from the “blood which is the life thereof,” to the very hairs of our heads. It has nothing to do with Geology as a science, and yet it tells of uplifted floods, and heaving mountains, and rending rocks, and submerged continents, and is ever speaking of the hills and waters in their endless phenomena. It contains no system of Zoology, and yet it describes all kinds of breathing things, from the leviathan of the seas, to the lion of the forest ; and from the lion down to the moth upon our garments. It makes no pretensions to a system of Natural History, and yet it contains accurate accounts, so far as they go, both of the flora and the fauna of all the ancient countries bordering the Mediterranean, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hysop on the wall, and from the ostrich of the desert to the sparrow that falleth to the ground.

It gives us no explanation, no theory, no system, and scarcely any classification. But what is most remarkable, when it does classify, it is found to be correct. Without any apparent aid from science, it sometimes seems to hit upon an order

which the science of after ages approves. For example, when in the first chapter of Genesis, it gives us a series or classification of all the living creatures, that fill up the vast scale of existence, between man at the head and the invertebrate animals at the foot, how wonderful is it that in its four divisions of beasts, birds, reptiles and fishes, it should have given us precisely that arrangement which our advanced modern science has proved to be the true order of nature.

While however it gives us little classification on any subject, it gives us facts on almost all—facts and phenomena, true to life and nature, because attested by the senses of eye and ear witnesses, and then recorded by the pen of inspiration. It transmits its record of facts, leaving us to dispose of them as we may in the light of advancing knowledge ; just as the medical philosopher disposes of the facts which were observed and recorded by Hippocrates, in Greece, some two thousand years ago.

Says an eminent British naturalist : “ The intention of Scripture is not scientific description ; yet, where we can now ascertain the true meaning of the text, the imagery drawn from natural history is always forcible, correct and effective, even where it treats the subject under the conditions of the contemporary popular belief.” And one of our ablest American authorities, Lieutenant Maury, is reported to have remarked recently in a public lecture, that “ in his investigations of science, he had always found that whenever he could meet with anything in the Bible on the subject, it afforded him a firm platform.”

Now few persons are aware of the frequency and fullness with which the Bible has spoken on many of the visible phenomena of the natural world. For instance, unusual as such

words would seem to be, and remote from its common topics, it has mentioned "snow" and "frost," in more than thirty passages, and the "stars" in more than forty. But whenever it has spoken, whether little or much, its statements are remarkable alike for their accuracy as to facts, and their freedom from any thing like theorizing.

You know how full the Bible is, of references and allusions to the healing art ; how it describes diseases and the remedies for disease ; how it speaks of physicians and apothecaries, and embalmers from the days of Moses down to Him, who was the great physician of souls. Yet, has it uttered no oracle, committed itself to no dogma, as to any system or science of medicine. This is indeed remarkable, when we remember its constant reference to the leprosy and other diseases and their cures during an authorship of fifteen hundred years, and a history of four thousand.

And here we may be allowed to mention a singular and curious fact which has not often been noticed. It is this : although the Bible speaks of so many diseases, and remedies for disease—so many outward applications for the body in disease, such as the washings and sprinklings for the leprosy, the balm of Gilead, the plaster of figs in Hezekiah's case, the oil and wine of the good Samaritan, the water and clay of our Saviour's miraculous cures, and even the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations, still there is not one recorded case of a remedy for disease, taken internally, in all the book. No, not a single instance of any medicine being administered, that had to be swallowed. Strange as it may appear, to us who are accustomed to live on medicine, from Genesis to Revelation, there is not one, unless that be an exception, in which the apostle prescribes to Timothy, a "little wine for his stomach's

sake and his often infirmities." And this, we think, is as far from establishing a precedent for medical practice, as it is from justifying strong drink as a beverage.

But to pass on ; these illustrations are sufficient to show with what fullness and minuteness the Bible has spoken of the facts of nature, without broaching any theory of nature.

In view, then, of this fullness on all the visible phenomena of nature, how do you account for this profound silence—this apparently guarded reticency of the Bible, as to any theory or explanation of nature? How is it that speaking so fully and dwelling so long in the midst of all the wonders of which our modern science treats, the Bible has never trespassed on one foot of the ground which modern science has claimed as her own?

To us there is but one solution. It is because there was a superhuman—even a Divine intelligence, ever present to superintend and to guide the pen of the sacred writers, as active and as potent in preserving them from what was false in science, as in giving them what was true in religion. So that the very silence of the Bible on all questions of physical science, may be regarded as one of its internal evidences—as an unanswerable argument for its Divine inspiration. And on this point we may adopt the striking remarks of Trench in reference to another subject : "Nor is it only what Scripture says, but its very silence which is instructive for us. It was said by one wise man of another, that more might be learned from his questions, than from another man's answers. With yet higher truth might it be said, that the silence of Scripture is oftentimes more instructive than the speech of other books ; so that it has been likened to a dial, in which the shadow, as well as the light, informs us."

We are told in the proverbs of Solomon, that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing,"—that, "a fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards." And so, the Bible seems everywhere to convey the impression, that it has not uttered all its mind, and that, so far from exhausting its knowledge, it might have told us infinitely more than it has seen fit to do. And well would it be for the world, if men would imitate the example, at least so far as not to utter their judgments on any and every question of science and religion, before they have had the time or the means for examination. The part of wisdom is to hold our judgment in abeyance on all unexamined questions of learning, and like the sacred writers, always know a little more than we appear to know, leaving something to be found out "afterwards." It would save us from many a vain delusion, and "many a foolish notion."

IV.—SECOND SCIENTIFIC CHARACTERISTIC.

This brings us to notice another remarkable feature of the Bible, in its relation to the natural sciences ; showing us the way, by which it has steered so clear of all theories and all absurdities on these great subjects. It is this ; that the sacred writers have uniformly spoken of the phenomena of nature, according to the usual language of men, in their daily intercourse. They have spoken of nature, according to the appearances of nature, and never in the vocabulary of science. And the notable thing is, that they are as free from the technicalities of ancient, as of modern science. They have taught nothing, they have written nothing, in the language of the schools,—not even ethics, not even theology. They always speak, God

himself always speaks, after the manner of men, in the ordinary phraseology of life. As well observed by Gaussen, with them the sun rises, the sun sets, the sun moves, the sun stops, the earth remains firm, as it seems to do. All things are spoken of precisely as they appear to the senses.

But here an objection has been raised. It has been asked : " Why did not the Creator so inspire the sacred historians, as to make them speak in the vocabulary of true science, and make them know, or at least appear to know, before we did, the true theory of the universe, the principle of gravitation, the size and distances of the heavenly bodies, the rotary motion of our globe, its periodical revolution, and the relative immobility of the sun !"

Now, you will perceive, that this question just resolves itself into another ; viz. " Why did not God give a revelation to teach us the physical sciences ?" And to this, it is a sufficient answer to say, that he wisely chose, that we should exercise our minds in learning them, from the great book of nature, where he had written them all at the beginning. There was no need of a new revelation to teach science, when in the ample scrolls of nature, men already had a revelation, which has in fact been found all-sufficient.

But, suppose the sacred writers had been made to speak in a language contrary to appearances, so as to suit the vocabulary of our most advanced sciences. What then ? How would the whole ancient world, in their ignorance of the experimental facts of science, have understood this prophetic language of science ? We shall presently see, that they had, in the Bible, some remarkable expressions of this very kind, which they did not, and could not understand, for this very reason, that they had no means of verifying them experimentally. Unable to

appreciate those which were given, what benefit could they have derived from having more? That which would appear beautiful and instructive to us, in the light of our experimental philosophy, would have been a dead letter to them. And no man, before the days of Copernicus, would have been able to decipher the record, and tell what the letter meant.

No; God hath wisely chosen the universal language of appearances, as the vehicle of a revelation intended for all men. Because the appearances of nature are, from generation to generation, the same; whilst the vocabulary of science is constantly changing. The stars shine, just as they did centuries ago: the winds blow, the rains descend, the waters roar now, as they did then. The whole face of the earth and heavens, wears about the same aspect to our eyes, that it wore in the eyes of Abraham and Job, Methuselah and Noah.

Hence the language of appearances, which in all ages is the language of daily intercourse, and always too the language of poetry, is the most certain, intelligible, and permanent language in the world. But as physical science, from its very nature, must be always progressive; and as our present advanced science is, after all, but an approximation to the truth; so, its vocabulary is ever changing; and if the Bible had spoken in the scientific dialect of our times, who can tell us, that this would have suited the higher science of ages yet to come?

Moreover, as many of these sciences are yet in their infancy, some of them perhaps not yet born, whilst even the oldest are comparatively young, who can tell us, what would have been the proper stopping-place, had the sacred writers received a scientific inspiration? As has been most significantly asked, would their knowledge "have reached the point which Newton attained, or only the point where Copernicus stopped, or would

it have extended over the heavens, as far as La Place and Herschel have carried it?" But in either case, it would have still remained incomplete and imperfect.

No; in the whole domain of the physical sciences, the purpose of Divine revelation was to give us, as a starting-point, the two stupendous truths, of a Divine Creator, and a Divine Providence over the universe, and leave all minor problems to stimulate the curiosity, and develop the energies of man's intellect. Hence God speaks to men, in the Bible, just as they speak to each other; not like a philosopher teaching science to a class, but like a philosopher speaking to the children and servants of his household, or to his fellow philosopher in their common conversation. For you may observe, that in the ordinary intercourse of society, men of science themselves speak the language of appearances.

This point has been forcibly presented by Professor Gaussen, in his work on the Inspiration of Scripture.

"Would men," says he, "have had the Bible to speak like Sir Isaac Newton? Would they forget, that if God should speak about scenes of nature—I do not say only as he sees it, but as the scientific men of future ages will see it—then the great Newton himself had understood nothing of it. Besides, even the most advanced language of science is not yet, and never will be, after all, anything more than the language of appearances. That which we call reality, is still itself only an appearance relatively to a more elevated reality, and a more profound analysis. And who can tell us where this analysis is to stop? The expression of appearances, provided it be exact, is then among men, a language philosophically correct; and is that which the Scriptures ought to have adopted."

"Would you," says he, "have the Bible speak of the

scenes of nature otherwise than as we speak of them to one another, in our domestic or social intercourse?—otherwise even, than as the learned themselves speak of them to one another? When Sir John Herschell asks his servants to send some one to awake him exactly at midnight, for the passage of some star over his meridian lens, does he think himself obliged to speak to them of the earth, of her rotation, and of the moment, when she shall have brought their nadir into the plane of her orbit? I think not. And if you ever heard him converse, in the Observatory of Greenwich, with the learned Airy, you would see, that even in this sanctuary of science, the habitual language of these astronomers is still just like that of the Scriptures. For them the stars rise, the equinoxes recede, the planets advance and are accelerated, stop, retrograde. Would you then have Moses speak to all the generations of men, in a language more scientific than that of La Place, Arago, and Newton?"

It is delightful too to find scientific men, especially the scientific men of our own generation, often recurring to the old familiar phraseology of the Bible when they would give utterance to some of their sublimest conceptions. Never has science paid to revelation a more graceful and heartfelt tribute than that which has been offered at her shrine by the men of this nineteenth century, as in their survey of the wonderful works of God, they have given vent to their emotions in the very words of God. Every reader of Maury's Physical Geography of the Sea must have been struck with this. This, too, constitutes one of the many charms of Dr. Kane's graphic volumes.

Isolated for two dreary winters, and shut up in his little ice-bound isle of life, almost as effectually as if he and his heroic band had become inhabitants of another world, how did he feel the

overpowering grandeur of the God of Inspiration. "I have trodden the deck and the floes, when the life of earth seemed suspended, its movements, its sounds, its colorings, its companionships ; and as I looked on the radiant hemisphere, circling above me, as if rendering worship to the unseen centre of light, I have ejaculated in humility of spirit, 'Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him ?' "

V.—THE THIRD CHARACTERISTIC.

But we come now to notice, more fully, another still more remarkable characteristic of the Bible, in its relation to the progress of the physical sciences. It is one which has been, in part, referred to already. It is the wonderful facility, with which the language of the Bible, in certain pregnant expressions, adjusts itself to every new scientific discovery, and harmonizes with every successive stage of scientific advancement. After all the gigantic strides which she has made, and is still making, science has found it impossible to leave the Bible behind. However deep she has dug into the surface of the earth, and however high she has climbed to build her nest among the stars, she soon finds that the Bible is close at her side. Nay, more ; when she has taken the wings of the morning, and said, I will dwell alone in the uttermost parts of the sea, and when she has found some far-off island, in some remote nook and corner of the universe, which she is about to call her own, by the right of prior discovery, she finds, to her amazement, that the Bible has been there before her—the pioneer and the very prophet of discovery !

As each new world of wonder has risen upon our view, and

each grand discovery has added its light to the firmament of our science, the language of the Bible has opened to receive it, as if endued with the elasticity of an endless life, and the expansive power of an infinite intelligence. For three hundred years past, but more especially during the last hundred, the spirit of philosophical inquiry has been knocking at every door in the universe, pushing her keen-eyed look of discovery, and her bold fingers of experiment, into every field of the heavens above, and every recess of the earth and ocean beneath ; and from all these—from the rocks and caves of the mountains, from the depths of the sea, from the torrid and frigid zones, from every buried generation of the dead, from every realm of animated nature, and from every region of immensity, she has been bringing home her spoils, her trophies of power, her treasures of wealth and wisdom, her monuments of art and industry, to beautify and adorn her temple—the crystal palace of universal science, enriched by the contributions of all lands and of all worlds.

And still the language of the Bible, so far from becoming antiquated and obsolete, falls in and harmonizes, with all this advancement, precisely as if it had been made to meet the case, and had from the beginning, anticipated all the brilliant discoveries and inventions of modern times. In a multitude of passages, its pregnant, oracular words, enigmatical and dark at first, have become luminous with the progress of time. They have exactly reversed the aspect of the fiery pillar that separated the camp of Israel from the Egyptians—they have been dark to those that went before, but radiant as the light of heaven to all who have come after: They have been rendered clearer and clearer by the progress of science, precisely as the prophecies obscure before their fulfillment, have been set in a clear light by the onward course of history. Yes, the Bible,

though speaking the language of appearances, abounds in these pregnant expressions, whose full force and beauty lay hidden on the bosom of its narrative for thousands of years ; whose full force and beauty were not perceived even by the men who wrote them ; indeed, never could have been perceived without the light of modern science ; and, perhaps are not even yet understood as they will be, by the men of future ages, who shall be blest with a more perfect science. We hold, that in these expressions, the language of the Bible has been, in a measure, prophetic of all the wonders which modern science has achieved. And there are pages in this venerable book, whose meaning has been developed, verified, and fulfilled, by the progress of scientific discovery, as truly and as signally, as any of its special predictions, by the events of history. Prophetically, it contains the history of all science, as it does the history of all the world.

To make good this assertion, let us select a few illustrations. For example, see how the first chapter of Genesis has enlarged itself to the vast compass of the geological ages, prior to the existence of man. A chapter swells into a volume ; a single verse into the cosmogony of the universe. Does geology stretch our vision backward, across the countless ages of the past, as the telescope had already stretched it, over the trackless fields of immensity ? Does it call for myriads of years, in which whole families and tribes of plants and animals sprung into existence, flourished for a season, and then passed away from the earth, before man appeared upon the stage ? This opening chapter of inspiration admits it all, covers it all, even seems to have anticipated it all.

Geology traces man back to the age to which the Bible refers him, and not one step farther ; both agree, that it was

late in the era of creation, before he commenced his wonderful career. Geology and Moses, also unite in tracing the earth itself, back to the very same point—to “the beginning,” and the creating hand of Omnipotence. Geology does not tell us how long ago, that first beginning was ; nor does Moses. But geology and Moses are agreed in this—that there was a beginning somewhere—a Divine creation out of nothing. The Bible is not any more sparing of time, than is geology. It will allow all the time that science asks for, short of eternity ; and geology herself will not allow that. Against the self-existence, or eternity of the material universe, science shuts the door as effectually as the Bible has done. All the vast epochs of organic life, whose history geology has discovered in the earth’s strata, graven as with an iron pen, and chronicled in the rocks forever—all the teeming domains of vegetable and animal existence, filling up those periods, whose perished forms, so long buried, have recently been disinterred—all these geology herself has traced to the hand of a Divine Author ; and they serve the double purpose of magnifying the glory of the Creator, while they illustrate the beauty and wisdom and intelligence of this venerable book.

Thus, in the light of geological science, we behold wondrous things in God’s word, which otherwise we should never have known. Thus has science become an interpreter of revelation, making its words assume a new and nobler import, its facts a larger and more profound significance. In the light of geological discovery, how do all those passages rise into beauty and grandeur, which connect the origin of the earth with water on the one hand, and its destruction with fire on the other ! They seem, thus interpreted, to set before us three grand geological cycles ; first, the “earth standing out of the water, and in the water”—the period of the pre-Adamic world ; next the

“heavens and the earth, which are now kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment”—the present order of existence ; and then the last grand era of a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”—the consummation of all things. In view of such revelations, might we not even appropriate the exclamation of an apostle on another subject ;—“Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !”

But, in the light of astronomical science, we have a still more remarkable illustration of the manner, in which the language of the Bible seems to have comprehended and anticipated all our discoveries. For example, hear what the Bible says, as to the shape and position of the earth. It was not known to have spoken on that subject at all, until a true astronomy gave us a light, by which to read understandingly, what it had said. And doubtless, there are many other subjects, on which it has given utterances, which we have not yet light enough to read aright ; which we now see, as through a glass darkly, but which a larger knowledge, hereafter, will enable us to see with open vision. But what has it said about the shape and position of the earth ?

Says the book of Job, “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” Again, “He hath compassed (or encircled) the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.” Says Solomon, “When he prepared the heavens, I (wisdom) was there ; when he set a compass upon the face of the deep ;” that is a “circle,” for such is the meaning of the word, “compass,” throughout the Bible. Says Isaiah, speaking of the Almighty, “He sitteth upon the circle of the earth.”

How wonderful is this language ! As remarked by another,

it might be taken as a fit motto for the last treatise on astronomy, or an inscription for Lord Rosse's telescope, or Professor Mitchell's observatory. Did Job, Solomon, and Isaiah, indeed know, that the earth was a circle—a sphere suspended over the empty place—hung up, on nothing, in the fields of space? If so, they were far in advance of all the men of their times, and they had more knowledge of astronomy, than the world has ever given them credit for. But if not, then what a proof is this, of an infinite intelligence, pervading their thoughts, and so shaping their words, as to anticipate the discoveries of our times, without shocking the prejudices of their own!

Again: of the fact that the sacred writers have been in advance of the world and wiser than all their translators, we have a striking illustration, in the use of our word "firmament," to denote the starry heavens. We get the word, in this usage, from "firmamentum" of the Latin version, and that introduces it as an exact synonym for "stereoma" of the Greek Septuagint, both of which mean something hard, solid, firm. But when we go back to the old Hebrew of Moses, we find that the original word, which, as Gaussen tells us, is seventeen times used to denote what we call the firmament, or starry heavens, has another meaning besides that of hardness and solidity; it means also the expanse, the vacant place, the ether, the far-reaching region, or immensity. Why, then, did the Greek and Latin translators use only stereoma and firmamentum to describe the sky? Because, in their utter ignorance of the true astronomy, they did not know as much about the nature of the sky as Moses did, or rather, as that infinite intelligence which guided the pen of Moses. And thus, you perceive, that with all our science, we still follow these ancient versions, and thus we are constantly speaking, like Addison, of the "spacious firmament on high,"

in a language far less philosophical than that which Moses used, when he called it "rakea," the expanse, the out-spread empty space. But we all know the sky is not hard, and does not even appear hard, though we call it the firmament, or firm place. Even so, let us not hold the inspired writers responsible for asserting or believing it to be hard, because their unscientific translators have made them call it "stereoma" and "firmamentum." Future ages, we trust, will not hold us responsible for believing it hard, because we have been made to call it the firmament.

Still further. In nothing has the triumph of modern science been more signal than in its enlargement, so to speak, of all the boundaries of the senses—its revelation to us, of a universe, outside of all that is seen by the naked eye, which appears absolutely illimitable, well-nigh infinite. Whilst geology has been opening to us, worlds on worlds in the cycles of the past, the telescope has been disclosing worlds without number, in the untrodden fields of immensity, and the microscope bringing to light new worlds of wonder, in everything around us and beneath us. On the one hand, the vast magnitudes and distances of the material universe, made known by the telescope, have seemed to dwarf man himself into an insect, an atom unworthy of his Maker's care, much more unworthy of his love, as displayed in the gospel. But, on the other hand, the millions of worlds beneath us, as revealed by the microscope, all teeming with life, have magnified man again, and raised him to his old dominion, as lord of all the creatures. All that he has been losing, in the scale of dignity, by the telescope, he has been gaining by the microscope. And as his own intellect has been the discoverer in both cases, so all that he has been losing, as a mortal, he has been gaining, as an immortal, by these revela-

tions. Does mortal man dwindle into comparative insignificance before the vastness of the material universe, as if, at last, matter had triumphed over mind? That very triumph is itself the proof of the majesty and the victory of the human mind. Because, it is man's mind which hath thus measured and mastered a universe, that so o'er-masters him.

And does man appear to dwindle into nothing as geology brings to light those vast teeming creations, and gigantic myriad forms of life that preceded him on the stage of existence? Geology herself shall reassert his dignity, for she never ceases to hold him up as the grand terminal head and apex of all these foregoing creations. Hugh Miller, in his last work, the "Testimony of the Rocks," says: "The knowledge of the geologist ascends no higher than man. He sees all nature in the pre-Adamic past, pointing with prophetic finger towards him. The long vista, opened up by his science, closes with the deputed lord of creation, with man as he at present exists; and when, casting himself full upon revelation, the veil is drawn aside, and an infinitely grander vista stretches out before him into the future, he sees man—no longer, however, the natural, but the Divine man—occupying what is at once its terminal point and its highest apex."

And then, after quoting two of the highest living authorities on the subject, Professors Owen and Agassiz, to the effect, that "man was the archetypal idea in the Divine mind," and the "end towards which all the animal creation has tended from the first appearance of the first Palæozoic fishes," he goes on to remark: "These surely are extraordinary deductions. 'In thy book,' says the Psalmist, 'all my members were written, which, in continuance, were fashioned, when, as yet, there was none of them.' And here is natural science, by the voice

of two of its most distinguished professors, saying exactly the same thing."

Our latest science, then, leaves man just where she found him, even where the Bible placed him at the beginning, a little higher than the beasts that perish, a little lower than the angels—"the sum total of all the animals of earth," and yet the image of God in the flesh.

"Distinguished link in being's endless chain,
Midway from nothing to the Deity,
A worm, a God."

How wonderful ! how profound ! how prophetic ! how true to science ! The Bible has not placed man where the telescope alone would have placed him, nor where the microscope alone would have placed him ; but where the two together have placed him, and where geology places him—at the head of the visible creation, at the foot of the Divine throne.

VI.—ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

We have said, that modern scientific discoveries have revealed a range of thought, a force and beauty of expression, in the Scriptures, which never had been appreciated before, and never could have been fully appreciated without them. Would you have a practical proof of this ? Go and read a treatise on astronomy, or listen to a course of popular lectures on the starry heavens, until conception fails, and imagination droops her wing, in the attempt to grasp the grandeur of the material universe : and then, when lost and bewildered by the contemplation, and without words to express your emotion, just open

the Bible at the book of Job, and read his sublime descriptions of the manifold works of God ; and see how those grand questionings and responses will have widened out to meet the dimensions of your widest thoughts ; “ Canst thou, by searching, find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? deeper than hell ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” How is it, that the words of the patriarch express our feelings, when gazing on the wonders of the universe in the light of science, better than we can express them ourselves ? And how is it, that we can see even more force and grandeur in the patriarch’s words than he ever saw himself ?

Or, if you please, listen to the sweet Psalmist of Israel, exclaiming, in wonder, as Jehovah telleth the number of the stars, calleth them all by their names, and leadeth out their hosts : “ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea : Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” As a description of the omnipresence of the Deity, is it not plain that this language assumes a wider range, and sweeps the chords of a higher, grander harmony in our hearts, than it could have done in the hearts of David’s contemporaries ? And yet, doubtless, it was beautiful and sublime to them. But to us, there is a meaning in the words, as much broader than the words themselves, as the universe of modern astronomy is broader than the little world of the ancients. It is as if the new-discovered works of God had

poured fresh light upon the words of God, and found their own grandeur all reflected back again.

Take another example from the eighth Psalm : " When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained : What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man that thou visitest him ? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels : and hast crowned him with glory and honor." And what is this ? It is an expression of wonder at the great condescension of God in his exaltation of man. It is in the form of an argument drawn from the littleness and insignificance of man, as contrasted with the magnitude and glory of the starry heavens. And the whole force of the argument lies in the greatness of the contrast.

But if that was a wonderful contrast in David's times, **what** is it now ? If that was an argument of power and beauty for the Divine condescension, to a man looking at the heavens, by night, with the naked eye, what an argument is it to one looking at them through the telescope ! Oh ! to what an immeasurable height and depth and length and breath, is the Divine condescension magnified now, in view of the littleness of man and the greatness of these telescopic heavens ! " When I consider thy heavens—in all their vast extent, in all their wealth of magnificence and glory—what is man, that Thou art mindful of him ! "

Did David understand astronomy ? Did he know and appreciate the sublime import of these words, and the full force of this great argument for the condescension of God ? " The point of view he thus assumes," says Gilfillan, " is inexplicable, except on the supposition of his entertaining an approximately true notion of the magnitude of those starry globes. If they had appeared to him only a few hundred bright spangles on the black robe of night, what was there in them so to have dwarfed

the earth with its vast expanse and teeming population ?” There is force in the question ; but we think there is another and better explanation. ’Tis not that David understood astronomy, even approximately ; but, that He, who inspired David’s mind and guided his pen, understood it, and caused him to write in a language which should become more and more luminous with the progress of ages.

But we may allow a skeptic here to select his own ground. Either David did, or he did not understand, something of the vastness of the material heavens. If he did, then he had a knowledge of astronomy, utterly unknown to all the ancient world besides. And how will the skeptic account for that knowledge, without a Divine revelation ? But if he did not ; then he spoke in a language which was as far in advance of his knowledge, as the Copernican astronomy is in advance of the Egyptian or Chaldean astrology. And how will the skeptic account for that without a divine inspiration ? To us there is but one solution ; there is an intelligence in the words of the Bible, higher than the words themselves, because they are God’s words.

Take one more example of an earlier date. We are told that the Almighty brought Abraham forth abroad and said—“ Look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them ;” and he said unto him, “ So shall thy seed be.” Again he said, “ I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore.”

Long afterwards, Jeremiah uses similar language, saying—“ As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured ; so will I multiply the seed of David.” The same metaphor is used again in the book of Nehemiah and in the epistle to the Hebrews ; showing that it was a favorite one with the sacred writers.

Now you will observe, in all these passages, that the Bible speaks of the stars precisely as modern science speaks of them : that is, as innumerable, multitudinous as the sands of the sea-shore. But how did the sacred writers know without the telescope, that the stars were numberless like the grains of sand ? Would we have known it without the telescope ? Did the world in fact know it before there was any telescope ? The ancient catalogues of Hipparchus and Ptolemy set down the whole number of the stars, at one thousand and twenty-six. And our own astronomers tell us, that in the clearest night, the naked eye can see only eleven hundred and sixty, whilst all that are visible to one watching all night at the equator, only amount to about three thousand. Are we then to suppose the Almighty to promise Abraham, merely that his posterity should equal in multitude, the one thousand stars, more or less, which he could see and count in a clear night ? If so, how would such a figure comport with the idea of a great nation, in which all other nations should be blest ? And if so, how could he associate this limited number of the stars, with the countless sands of the sea-shore ? If his seed should be like the stars and like the sands in number ; then must not the stars be numberless like the sands ? Things that are equal to the same you know are equal to one another.—Whether Abraham drew that conclusion or not, that conclusion is legitimate.

Thus, you see, we are shut up to the necessity of either granting to the sacred writers a knowledge of the stars, such as the telescope alone has revealed to us, or ascribing to their words a higher import than they did themselves. In either case, whether Abraham and Jeremiah knew, by logical inference from these Divine visions, and knew for the first time, that the

stars like the sands were innumerable ; or whether these words of the Almighty, intentionally and prophetically comprehended this idea of innumerability without their comprehending it—be it either way, we do not see how any man can resist the conviction, that the book is an inspired revelation from God. If this is not a demonstration of its truth, we are at a loss to know what would constitute a demonstration. If this is not a demonstration, we should like to know where the demonstration fails.

Is it objected that, by a kind of optical illusion, the stars appear innumerable, even to us, as they do to every casual and superficial observer who has not watched them nightly ; and hence it was natural for the Bible to speak of them as it does of the sand, according to appearances ? The answer is, that we cannot suppose Abraham or Moses to have been either a casual or superficial observer. Living as they did in the age of “astrologers and star-gazers and prognosticators,” living so much and so long in the open air, and leading a shepherd’s life, we cannot suppose them ignorant of that astrology which constituted the chief study and the most ancient science of Egypt and Chaldea, and indeed of the whole nomadic world. With the names, places, motions and apparent numbers of the stars, they must have been almost as familiar as with the sheep of their flocks and the servants of their households. And yet, by comparing the stars to the sands, they have indicated a series, whose limit for multitude, neither the telescope nor the calculus of our astronomy has yet been able to reach.

But to conclude these illustrations, is it not wonderful, infinitely wonderful, that ever since the days of Abraham, this book should have spoken of the stars, in a language which, while it has been more or less intelligible to all the intervening ages, is

most intelligible to this age of astronomers—this age whose sky-compelling telescopes, stretching away into the depths of immensity, far as an angel's flight, have made all the nebulae of night to swarm with new worlds, until we behold a starry universe upon which, if numbers can be written at all, they are numbers beyond all human computation? In view of such wondrous revelations of science and the Bible, may we not with reverence even apply to this subject, the words of an apostle when speaking of the sufferings and glory of Christ? That these holy men of old, searched what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of these things, and the glory that should follow. In both cases, it would seem they spoke by revelation, they spoke prophetically; and they sought diligently to know, without even finding out, the full extent of their own words.

Such then is the Bible in its relation to the sciences, both moral and natural. We have seen how it contains all the fundamental facts and principles of Theological and Ethical science. We have seen how it furnishes the best materials for all Legislative and Psychological science. We have seen, also, how it stands related to the modern physical sciences—silent as to all their theories, adjusting itself to all their discoveries, recording their phenomena as they appear to the senses, and in certain pregnant expressions, seeming to anticipate many of their most sublime and wonderful results. Such, and so glorious, is the science of the Bible.

This characteristic of the Bible, has indeed attracted the notice of some of our scientific writers of the very highest authority, who have given illustrations of it in their pages.

Lieutenant Maury, in his popular work, "The Physical Geography of the Sea," has the following passage—

“The Bible frequently makes allusion to the laws of nature, their operation and effects. But such allusions are often so wrapped in the folds of the peculiar and graceful drapery with which its language is occasionally clothed, that the meaning, though peeping out from its thin covering all the while, yet lies in some sense, concealed, until the lights and revelations of science are thrown upon it ; then it bursts out and strikes us with the more force and beauty. As our knowledge of nature and her laws is increased, has our understanding of many passages in the Bible been improved. The Bible called the earth ‘the round world ;’ yet for ages it was the most damnable heresy, for Christian men to say the world is round : and finally sailors circumnavigated the globe, proved the Bible to be right, and saved Christian men of science from the stake. ‘Can’st thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades ?’ Astronomers of the present day, if they have not answered this question, have thrown so much light upon it as to show, that if ever it be answered by man, he must consult the science of astronomy. It has been recently all but proved, that the earth and the sun, with their splendid retinue of comets, satellites and planets, are all in motion around some point or centre of attraction inconceivably remote, and that that point is in the direction of the star Alcyon, one of the Pleiades. Who but the astronomer then could tell their sweet influences ? And as for the general system of atmospherical circulation which I have been so long endeavoring to describe, the Bible tells it all in a single sentence, ‘The wind goeth toward the south and turneth about unto the north, it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits !’ ”

To this we may also add the high authority of Professor Dana, in his admirable article on “Science and the Bible” in a

recent number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Speaking of the Mosaic account of the creation, he says, "The first thought that strikes the scientific reader is the evidence of Divinity, not merely in the first verse of the record, and the successive *fiats*, but in the whole order of creation. There is so much that the most recent readings of science have for the first time explained, that the idea of man as the author becomes utterly incomprehensible. By proving the record true, science pronounces it divine; for who could have correctly narrated the secrets of eternity but God himself."

Amongst other illustrations showing how an infinite mind must have guided the pen of the sacred writer, he remarks, "Man again would never have separated the creation of light so far from that of the sun, to us the source of light; neither would he have conceived of the creation of the firmament, as that word is usually understood, and was understood by the Jews, without the stars as a part of its decoration. Moreover there is a sublimity and system in the arrangement, and a far-reaching prophecy, to which philosophy could not have attained, however instructed."

Hugh Miller and others have spoken of the "Geologic Prophecies," referring to those typical forms which, in an ever ascending scale, ran through all the creations of animal life prior to man's existence, and, as "shadows of better things to come," heralded and prepared the way before him. The thought is a grand one. But it is manifest, that these Geological Prophecies have waited long for an interpreter. However true, or intelligibly written upon the rocks, they have, in fact, been hidden from man through all past ages, and as it were, laid by for the special reading and exposition of the science of these latter days. Precisely so has it been, with these other Prophecies—

these latent scientific prophecies or anticipations of the word of God, of which we have been speaking, which seem to have been so deeply imbedded in the sacred text, that the world has not seen them hitherto, nor indeed could see them now, were it not that our advancing science is revealing them. The Geologic Prophecies, though they might have been read, could not be understood till the fullness of the time had come. And it is only as the fullness of the time comes, in the brighter light of increasing scientific knowledge, that these grand old oracles of the Bible, so apparently simple but so marvellously pregnant with meaning, stand forth at once cleared of all erroneous human glosses, and vindicated as the inspired testimonies of Jehovah. For long ages interpreted wrong, for other ages perhaps not interpreted at all, they come at last to the fullness of time, and find a true interpreter in a true science, and are at once known and read of all men, the more sublime and beautiful because they have been so long unrevealed.

VII.—THE SAGES OF THE BIBLE.

But who, you may be ready to ask, are the sages of the Bible? We answer, all its writers; the forty authors of its sixty-six different books are its sages, its wise men, its philosophers, although they have not boasted of the title. There is no one of them who is not more worthy of the name of sage, than any of the wise men of Greece, or the philosophers of Rome. To have written and published in Greece or Rome, any one of these sixty-six treatises which make up the Bible, would have immortalized Solon or Lycurgus, Aristotle or Plato, Socrates or Xenophon, Seneca or Cicero, Tacitus or Pliny. And if the

authorship of a single one of the larger books could now be traced to the greatest of the classical writers, it is but little to say that it would more than double his present fame as a sage and philosopher.

There is, however, a distinction here, among the sacred writers. Moses is the great sage of jurisprudence and legislative science, standing in that department without a rival, at the head of the list. But Paul is just as great in another department ; standing as the unrivalled master of all theological learning. In ethics, Solomon stands confessedly at the head, as the great moral preacher and sage of the Old Testament : whilst in all that relates to the science of the soul, including its ethics, the sayings of Christ in the New Testament, reported by his followers, like those of Socrates, have given us more light than all the oracles of all the world besides. These four, Moses, Paul, Solomon and Jesus, stand respectively as the representatives of those four great branches of moral science, jurisprudence, theology, ethics and psychology, on which the Bible has spoken out with the authoritative voice of a teacher come from God. And what Milton has ascribed to them in one of these departments, is true of them and of their fellow teachers, in all the rest.

“ As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy and keeps it so.”

In physical science, which, as we have seen, the Bible does not profess to teach, although it has recorded facts and descriptions of universal nature, true to life, the palm of wisdom is

divided between Job, David and Solomon. Each was a keen observer of nature. Each had an eye to admire and a heart to feel its grandeur and beauty. Each seems to have held daily and nightly communion with it. And each has given us admirable descriptions, drawn from the scenery of the earth and heavens.

For instance, did you ever read attentively the hundred and fourth Psalm, where the writer winds up a description of universal nature, animate and inanimate, with the exclamation: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all!" Even Humboldt, one of the least evangelical of all the great names of modern science, could not fail to admire it. Pronouncing it a picture of the entire Cosmos, he says: "We are astonished to find, in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches."

Did you ever read attentively the twenty-eighth chapter of Job, where, to everything in the earth, and under the earth, and above the earth, he puts that sublime question, which can find no response in the universe except in God: "Whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?" Read it again and say, if any recorded saying of Socrates or any of the Grecian sages, is half so memorable or half so graphic, as the closing answer of the Almighty: "Behold! the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."

As for Solomon, he has a double title to the name of sage. He was at once the great moral philosopher and the great naturalist of his times. Hear what the sacred historian says of him. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the

sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men : and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs ; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hysop that springeth out of the wall : he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." Or, as the same things would be expressed in the language of our times, he was a botanist, zoologist, ornithologist, herpetologist, and ichthyologist. He was, however, as truly a naturalist, and a sage of learning and wisdom, as he would have been with these high-sounding titles to his name ; and we must not allow the simple language of the Bible to detract from our estimate of the real greatness of its characters.

Enough has been said to show that the writers of the Bible deserve the title of sage : enough also to show what sort of science is in the Bible, and what is not there. Be it much, or be it little, there is something else there—something nobler, something holier than any human science, which has made it the most attractive of all books, to the most scientific minds. There is something in it which at once separates and distinguishes it from every other book. For, as beautifully remarked by Dr. Hamilton, "the Bible, like Tabor, is a 'mountain apart ;' isolated, unique, peculiar ; and the farther up you get—the more acquainted you become with human books, and the more, alongside of them, you study the book of God—the more amazed will you be at its outstanding elevation, its world-topping preëminence."

The greatest names that modern science can boast, from Bacon and Locke, Leibnitz and Newton, Pascal and Linnæus,

to Davy and Herschel, Cuvier, Brewster and Miller, have yielded their profoundest homage to the Bible. It has been recently stated, on good authority, that amongst all the scientific men of our country now living, there is scarcely one of the first rank who could be set down as an atheist or infidel. And on the other side of the water, however it may be with the science of Continental Europe, we think it will be found, that all the greatest living lights of the British Isles may be fairly ranged on the side of Christianity and the Bible.

As for the future, although it is the destiny of science to make endless progress, while the Bible, as containing a completed revelation, must ever stand by its ancient landmarks, we have no fear, that science and the Bible will ever clash. Our confidence in their ultimate and eternal harmony is grounded on the conviction, that they are ordained of God, each in its proper sphere, to be a revelation of his will to man. The expounder of science and the expounder of the Bible ought to feel that they are brothers and co-workers. The one ought to feel, that he has as much at stake, in making his established facts harmonize with the book of God, as the other has, in so interpreting that book as to reconcile it with the progress of science. And whenever there is an apparent discrepancy, as there has often been, the presumption on both sides ought to be, for it is a presumption justified by all past experience, not that there is a conflict of facts, but a conflict of interpretations and opinions.

We have no sympathy with those on the one side, any more than with those on the other, who are accustomed to represent the two great record books of God as being in conflict, or likely to become so, in their established facts. There are two Testaments in the Bible—an earlier and a later one—and we are very sure that they speak the truth—the same harmonious truth, to

all who will read and interpret them aright. And if God has also graven another still earlier testimony in the rocks, we are very sure that this also will speak the truth to all who read and interpret it aright. But as fallible man may give, and often has given, a wrong interpretation both to the written and the rocky records, it is the great work and duty of all the friends of truth on every side, to compare these records faithfully, to read them in the light of each other, and to interpret and expound the one by the other, even as we do the Old Testament by the New, and vice versa.

The great Bacon, father of our inductive philosophy, was willing to read and to recognize both books—the book of revelation and the book of nature, as the two grand Scriptures of God. But the great Bacon, in his day, had access to only one Testament of the book of nature—the New Testament so to speak of the living world around him. It has been reserved to modern geology to bring to light an older dispensation—to unfold from the rocks and read to us what may be called the Old Testament of the book of nature, “*ut tanquam altera Scriptura.*”

Let us then receive the records of God wherever he has written them, not fearing that the great Author of nature and of the Bible has contradicted himself, or that one of his books can suffer damage from the reading of the other. “The two records,” remarks Professor Dana, “the earlier revelation and the later, are one in their sublime enunciations of the history of creation. There is a like grandeur in the progress of the ages. They both contain conceptions infinitely beyond the reach of the human intellect, and bear equal evidence of their divine origin. ‘The grand old book of God still stands,’ and this old earth, the more its leaves are turned over and pondered,

the more will it sustain, enlighten, and illustrate the sacred word. The two are independent inscriptions, written in lines of light by the same sun of righteousness, and the more deeply they are studied and loved for their truths, the higher may we rise towards the effulgence of their eternal source."

Such is the noble testimony of science, as expounded by one of her most worthy representatives on this side of the water. And most nobly does theology respond to the sentiment, from the other side, by one of the most accomplished of her living expounders. "Science," says Dr. McCosh, "has a foundation, and so has religion; let them unite their foundations, and the basis will be broader, and there will be two compartments of one great fabric reared to the glory of God. Let the one be the outer, and the other the inner court. In the one let all look, and admire, and adore; and in the other let those who have faith kneel, and pray, and praise. Let the one be the Sanctuary, where human learning may present its richest incense as an offering to God, and the other, the Holiest of all, separated from it by a veil now rent in twain, and in which on a blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, we pour out the love of a reconciled heart, and hear the oracles of the living God."

And what need we say more? The great Newton, after expounding the laws of the material universe, closed the labors of his life in expounding the chronology of the book of God. And how many in every age—the masters of art and eloquence, the laurel-crowned princes of science and literature—have come, like him, to this book, that they might learn their last lessons of celestial wisdom at the feet of Jesus! "Newton," says Gilfillan, "laid not his dying head on his Principia, but on his Bible; Cowper, not on his Task, but on his Testament; Hall, not on his wide fame, but on his humble hope; Michael Angelo,

not on that pencil which alone coped with the Judgment, but on that grace which for him, shore the Judgment of its terrors : Coleridge, not on his limitless genius, but on the mercy of God. Often must the wanderer, amid American forests, lay his head upon a rude log, while above it is the abyss of the stars. Thus the weary, heavy-laden, dying Christian leans upon the rugged and narrow cross, but looks up, the while, to the beaming canopy of immortal life—to those things which are above.” So may we at last, cling to the Bible and lean upon Christ and his cross, as our sublimest science.

For in whatever light we survey the subject, whether of history, philosophy, or experience, we feel all the force of the conclusion, brought out with such power by the author of that great work, “The Knowledge of God,”—a work which is itself a demonstration of the true science of the Bible, and an imperishable monument to the genius and learning of our country—“If these Scriptures are not the product of a superhuman intelligence, it requires a superhuman intelligence to determine what they are the product of.”

Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies
And bind the Bible to my heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

ORIGINAL CONCEPTIONS; OR, OBJECTS OF SUBLIMITY
AND BEAUTY, IN THE BIBLE.

The Divine Existence—The Providence of God—The Personal Character of Christ—The Idea of Special Divine Influence—The Church of God—The Common Brotherhood of Man—The Day of Sacred Rest—The Millennium—The Resurrection of the Dead—The Last Judgment—The Heavenly World—The Scheme of Redemption—Recapitulation and Conclusion.

IN order to form a proper estimate of the Bible as a book of taste and genius, we have been led to survey its literary and scientific characteristics—its wide range of history and its singularly diversified biographical characters. The subject is not yet exhausted. There is one distinct and important field which has not yet fallen under our review. There is one train of thought which, through all these illustrations, has been constantly presenting itself to the mind's eye from a distance, which deserves now to be brought more fully into view. It is so rich in the choicest fruits of literature, so adorned with all that goes to make up a landscape of surpassing glory, that it may be taken as the subject of a separate investigation. It is a survey of the great original conceptions of the Bible, regarded simply as objects of intellectual beauty and of moral grandeur, which we here propose.

Our purpose is to single out from the mass of facts and doc-

trines revealed in the Bible, certain leading ideas, which everywhere pervade the book as its own peculiar and original discoveries ; and to look at these ideas, not now as matters of fact, viewed from the stand-point of theological truth and duty, but simply as matters of thought viewed from the stand-point of intellectual and moral beauty—that beauty indeed which even if they were false, would still belong to them, as the most wonderful and original conceptions of the human mind.

To every thoughtful reader of the Bible it is apparent, that there are certain great fundamental principles, or doctrines of a general character, which belong so exclusively to the book, that they may be called its special property, its original sterling stock of thought. Though now incorporated as part and parcel of the learning of the whole civilized world, to such an extent that the world often forgets from what quarter they came, still these conceptions are all to be traced to the Bible as their native home. For it will be found, that where the Bible has borrowed one great thought from the literature of the ancient world, it has loaned a thousand to that of the modern. Old and familiar as they are to us, they were new when the Bible struck them out.

Now, many of these great leading ideas which distinguish the Bible from all other books, are, at the same time, so marked with the elements of the sublime and beautiful, that they cannot fail to constitute a very high attraction to those who are capable of appreciating such things. Hence, among the manifold attractions of the book of God, we would assign a place—and no inferior place—to its grand conceptions or in other words its objects of intellectual and moral beauty. It is our present purpose to present, in connection, some of these peculiar revelations of the Scriptures. For we think, that aside from their

higher claims as Divine eternal truths, there are to be found here, even on the lower ground of classical beauty, revelations of glory, and scenes of loveliness, and heights of grandeur, and flashes of immortal light, far exceeding all other discoveries and conceptions of human genius. So that, if a man love to dwell in the regions of lofty thought, to soar into the third heaven of imagination, to rise from the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal, if he have a soul, whose high conceptions may be kindled and dilated by the contemplation of all that is most beautiful in nature, most sublime in science, most noble in action, most Godlike in holiness and virtue—this is the book for him, the book that first opens a new world of wonder within us, and then opens to us a clear vision into the future and eternal world.

There is a voice here which seems to call from heaven, like the angel of the Apocalypse, saying “Come up hither, and I will show thee things to come.” There were good things to be found in Nazareth, notwithstanding the prejudices of the good Nathaniel. But said the Master, “Thou shalt see greater things than these, when thou shalt see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man.” The traveller, you know, who would command a wide and glorious horizon, must ascend the mountain-top: if he would enjoy a vision of transcendent loveliness and grandeur, he must toil for it, he must climb the very crags of the mountains; and the higher he climbs the wider will be his field of vision. Even so is it in that spiritual world which the Bible reveals. Let us then endeavor to ascend these glorious heights. Let us rise from facts to principles, from the concrete and particular to the abstract and the universal, from the living historical characters that everywhere adorn the inspired pages, to those grand,

ennobling, conceptions of eternal truth, which made the men, women, and children of the Bible what they were ; which constituted their manna from heaven—that daily ambrosial food on which their immortal spirits fed even while dwelling in the tabernacles of clay.

The world, it is said, is governed by ideas. Assuredly there is nothing in the world more important and influential than a great idea : for its destiny is to work itself out in the great facts and grand events of history. A great idea, in full possession of a single mind, for instance the idea that struggled so long for birth in the mind of Columbus, is a great gain to the world. How much more, when such an idea takes possession of the public mind of a nation, a generation or the race of man ! Now if it shall be shown, that the world is indebted to the Bible for more of its grand, inspiring ideas—ideas having power both to absorb its thought and control its destiny—than to any other source, who will say, that the Bible does not thereby fully vindicate its claim to supremacy, not only as man's greatest classic, but as God's own inspired oracle ?

I.—THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

As the first illustration of this moral sublimity let us take the idea of God, as he is made known in the Bible ; that, is the twofold idea of the Divine existence and the Divine character, the conception of a personal, reigning, all-pervading Deity, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Jehovah, creating and upholding all things by the fiat of his will and the word of his power, existing in himself from eternity to eternity, without beginning and without end—the infinitely wise, the infinitely good, the infin-

itely holy—"God over all, blessed forever." Although the Scriptures have themselves made the unanswerable challenge, "Can'st thou by searching find out God? Can'st thou find out the Almighty into perfection?" still no idea can be more distinct, consistent and intelligible, than that which the Scriptures have everywhere given of the Divine character. Throughout the book from beginning to end, it is the same sublime conception of the self-existent, infinitely perfect God, as announced by Paul on Mars Hill, "God that made the world and all things therein, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, seeing he is Lord of all," or as proclaimed by the prophet, "Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool," or as affirmed by the Saviour, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." In every page, in every line, in every manifestation, it is the same august and awful idea, without a likeness or a counterpart in anything else on earth or in heaven, of a pure personal spirit, as expressed in the creed of the church, "infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness and truth."

This, you will say, is the one, clear idea of the God of the Bible—the unsearchable, the unapproachable object of the homage and adoration of the whole rational and moral universe. Now compare this conception of God, with any other idea of a Deity, not derived from the Scriptures, which has ever appeared in the literature of the world, ancient or modern. The Koran of Mohammed is out of the question; for whatever it contains, either of truth or sublimity, was stolen from the Scriptures. The North American Indians could talk of a "Great Spirit;" but perhaps with no higher conceptions, than of an Indian of like passions with themselves, built on a little larger scale; and it may be, that the name itself is all that remains to

tell of those primeval revelations which their ancestors had received from the God of the Bible before the dispersion of the race at Babel. But compare the Scriptural idea of the unsearchable and ever blessed God, "the God of glory," with any conception of a Deity to be found in the mythology or philosophy of the classical Greeks and Romans, or in the monuments of Chaldean and Egyptian learning, or in the religious books of the modern Pagan nations : and you will find, that the difference between the two, in point of sublimity alone, not to say truth and reason, is somewhat akin to that which lies between the world of the ancient astrologers and the universe of modern astronomy. "The Bible," says Dr. Turner, "represents God as no mortal genius ever could, as no human intellect, unblest by inspiration, ever did, or can. Hell is naked before him—heaven is unfolded—all things are like nothing, all things are nothing, when compared with him, the infinite Maker."

It is safe to say, that the God of the Bible is the profoundest, sublimest, most inspiring object of thought which the human intellect has ever essayed to grasp. No one thought has taken so deep a hold upon the human mind : no one theme has given it so much healthful exercise : no one idea has done so much to enlarge its calibre, and ennoble its aspirations. One of the greatest statesmen of modern times, Mr. Webster, when requested by a friend to name what he regarded as the most important thought that had ever entered his mind, after a solemn pause, replied : "My accountability to God." And had he been asked for the sublimest conception of the mind, would he not have answered, "God himself?"

We are all so familiar, from our childhood, with the Scriptural idea of God, it has become so incorporated with the literature

of the civilized world, that we often fail to appreciate its grandeur as an original conception, and its value as the highest of all scientific truths. But suppose, that while blest with the knowledge of all other things, we could grow up to full maturity of intellect in utter ignorance of the Scriptural idea of God—suppose, that with the mental vigor of Socrates, the learning of Cicero, the taste of Addison, the moral tone and enthusiasm of Burke, we should receive, for the first time and all at once, the full conception of the person and character of Jehovah as revealed in the Bible—suppose, that thus endowed and prepared, we could stand where Moses stood, in the clefts of Sinai's rocks, whilst the visions of uncreated glory passed by, and a voice was heard proclaiming, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth"—suppose we could stand where Isaiah stood, see and hear what Isaiah saw and heard, when the Lord sat upon his burning throne, and the Seraphim cried one to another: "Holy! Holy! Holy! is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory!" Suppose we could stand with the seer of Patmos, amid the visions and trumpets and thunders of the Apocalypse, and gaze in upon the choirs of angels and redeemed ones, who cease not day nor night to cast their glittering crowns before the throne, and cry: "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!"—how would all the images of earthly grandeur dwindle into insignificance, how would all our loftiest conceptions of Divinity, derived from Greek and Roman classics, sink into annihilation, before such a vision and such a manifestation of the one living and true God of the Bible, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast, at whose presence the perpetual hills

did bow, before whose glance the everlasting mountains were scattered, who said, "Let there be light : and there was light."

The Bible is not only the revealer of the unknown God to man, but his grand interpreter as the God of nature. In revealing God, it has given us the key that unlocks the profoundest mysteries of creation—the clue by which to thread the labyrinth of the universe—the glass through which to look from nature up to nature's Author. It is only when we stand and gaze upon nature with the Bible in our hands and its idea of God in our understandings, that nature is capable of rising to her highest majesty as the oracle and mouth-piece of God, of kindling in our souls their highest emotions of moral beauty and sublimity. Without the all pervading spiritual God of the Bible in our thoughts, nature's sweetest music would lose its charm—the universe its highest significance and glory. It is just when we stand and gaze upon the heavens and the earth, with God's word as our interpreter, that the heavens and earth shine forth with their divinest lustre—all nature vocal with God, all creatures offering praise.

Go and stand, with your open Bible, upon the Areopagus of Athens, where Paul stood so long ago : in thoughtful silence, look around upon the site of all that ancient greatness : look upward to those still bright and glorious skies of Greece ; and what conceptions of wisdom and power will all those memorable scenes of nature and art convey to your mind, now, more than they did to an ancient worshipper of Jupiter or Apollo ? They will tell of Him, who made the worlds, "by whom, and through whom, and for whom, are all things." To you that landscape of exceeding beauty, so rich in the monuments of departed genius, with its distant classic mountains, its deep blue sea, and its bright bending skies, will be telling a tale of glory, the

Grecian never learned ; for it will speak to you, no more of its thirty thousand petty contending deities, but of the one living and everlasting God.

Go and stand with David and Isaiah under the star-spangled canopy of the night, and, as you look away to the "range of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres, wheeling unshaken through the void immense," take up the mighty questionings of inspiration : "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Go and stand upon the heights at Niagara : look upon that "matchless robe of terror and of beauty," rolling on forever, and as it rolls, "notching the centuries" in the everlasting rocks : listen, in awe-struck silence, to that boldest, most earnest and eloquent of all nature's orators. And what is Niagara with its plunging waters and its mighty roar? It is but the oracle of God. It is but the whisper of his voice, who is revealed in the Bible, as sitting above the water-floods forever. "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters : the God of glory thundereth : the Lord is upon many waters : the voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

Go with your Bible and stand upon the crumbling verge of

the volcano. Look down into its awful crater as into the opening mouth of hell; gaze upon its fierce, surging billows of liquid fire; hear its deep muttering thunders, ominous of the coming explosion; behold its red artillery plunging and ploughing down the mountain sides, its dense volume of smoke and cinders, rising up as if to extinguish the sun! And of whom do *Ætna* and *Vesuvius* speak? What are they but the symbols of His presence, and the heralds of His wrath, who is yet to arise in his majesty, "whose voice shook the earth, and shall once more shake not only earth, but also heaven?" What are they but premonitors of that day wherein "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Go once more and stand with Coleridge, at sunrise, in the Alpine valley of Chamouny; join with him in that magnificent invocation to the hoary mount, "sole sovereign of the vale," to rise with all its streams, and groves, and cataracts, and ice-fields—

" And tell the silent sky,
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
 Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God."
 " God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations
 Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
 God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
 Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
 And they, too, have a voice, yon piles of snow,
 And in their perilous fall shall thunder God!"

Who can stand amid scenes like these, with the Bible in his hands, and not feel, that if there is moral sublimity to be found on earth, it is in the book of God, it is in the thought of God?

For what are all these outward visible forms of grandeur, but the expression and the utterance of that conception of Deity which the Bible has created in our minds, and which has now become the leading and the largest thought of all civilized nations? And what would these types and symbols be without the Bible as God's interpreter?

II.—THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

As the second illustration of intellectual and moral grandeur in the Bible, let us take the doctrine of Divine Providence, including as it does, the idea of God's natural and moral government over the world. We might have taken his work of creation—the calling into being out of nothing of all worlds and creatures. This is a sublime exhibition of power, and a striking illustration of the superiority of the Scriptures over all other books; for, it is manifest, that no other account of the origin of all things, not even the "development hypothesis," is half so sublime, half so philosophical, as the Mosaic account. But it is more to our present purpose, to take the Scriptural idea of Divine Providence, as one of those great objects of thought, or fundamental facts of revelation, whose contemplation is fitted to inspire our minds with sentiments of the highest sublimity and beauty. A God existing from all eternity is a sublime conception. A God creating all things out of nothing is sublime and glorious. But it is a God providing and governing all things in infinite wisdom and goodness, after the counsel of his own will, and for the furtherance of his own glory and his children's well-being, that we are to contemplate, in the Scripture doctrine of eternal providence. It is a God, not afar off, reposing in

the distant places of the universe, but ever present with the least as with the greatest of his creatures ; foreseeing the end from the beginning, everywhere educing good out of evil ; and whilst carrying forward the vast machinery of countless worlds of animate and inanimate beings, numbering the very hairs of our heads ; not suffering a sparrow to fall to the ground except in fulfillment of his everlasting decrees ; a God whose energetic will gives force to all the laws of physical nature ; whose all-inspecting government extends to every inhabitant of the material and moral universe.

“ Who sees with equal eye as God of all
 A hero perish and a sparrow fall :
 Atoms and systems into ruin hurled,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”

This sublime idea of infinite Intelligence and Power, filling the throne of the universe, governing and guiding all its vastest and minutest movements—the Deity in activity—is the conception of Divine Providence, which is everywhere unfolded to our view in the Scriptures. “Thou God seest me”—“The Lord will provide”—“The heavens do rule”—“The Lord reigneth”—“The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men”—this is the variously expressed, but constant thought of the sacred writers. The great truth is well expressed in the decree of the king of Babylon : “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endureth from generation to generation : all his works are truth and all his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.” But we need not multiply quotations. You know how full the Bible is of this doctrine. Every page of the sacred oracles either affirms or exemplifies it : and every chapter of human history confirms it. The Lord sitteth in the heavens as governor among the nations. “The

heart of man deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.

Now without stopping further to elucidate this great general principle of the Bible, which we call Providence, or the moral government of God, may we not affirm, that as an object of contemplation, it possesses the highest attributes of sublimity and beauty? Where shall we find a wider fact? Where shall we find a more glorious conception? Where shall we find a more exalted study? What is it, but the scheme of policy on which the jurisprudence of the universe is administered? What is it, but the record book on which time is ever writing the fulfilled decrees of Jehovah, and turning the facts of prophecy into those of history? What is it, but one vast, unending scroll, upon whose opening leaves all the high and holy intelligences of heaven are gazing with new wonder and ever growing delight? There is something sublime in the idea of a vast empire on earth, like that of ancient Rome: something grand and imposing in the scheme of its policy, the sweep of its history, the vigilant providence of its government, the iron rigor of its authority. But what is an earthly empire with all its provisions of wisdom and power, to the universal and eternal government of God?

And yet there have been men, who, while professing admiration for the sublime and beautiful, have looked with indifference or contempt upon the Bible, as a book of no attractions. But is there nothing attractive and glorious in the idea of a government so general as to embrace all created beings, and so particular as not to overlook or neglect the lowest link in "being's endless chain"—a government moving on forever in perfect equity, in unjarring harmony, with irresistible power, to the consummation of its august and beneficent designs? Surely it would be hard to find the dwelling-place of moral grandeur,

if there be no grandeur in the idea of Divine Providence. But it is far different. The most gifted minds that have adorned the annals of modern literature, have found both beauty and sublimity, as well as consolation and joy, in this great scriptural truth : and many have brought the noblest powers of genius to the elucidation of its profound mysteries, as they have sat at the feet of Jesus, and joined in the invocation of Milton :

“What in me is dark
 Illumine : what is low, raise and support ;
 That to the height of this great argument,
 I may assert eternal Providence
 And justify the ways of God to men.”

III.—THE PERSONAL CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

Let us pass now to a third illustration, of a different order ; to contemplate an object of exquisite moral beauty. It is the person and character of Jesus Christ—the Scriptural conception of Immanuel, as revealed in the prophets and portrayed in the New Testament. If there is any one thing in the Bible, which comes to the world with all the glory of a new discovery, as original as it is peculiar, it is the idea of immaculate virtue, as embodied in the life and character of Jesus Christ. Whether we read the prophets of the Old Testament or the evangelists of the New, the conception of his person and character is the same, shining out with all the distinctness of a living presence. No character was ever drawn in bolder, clearer lines. No personage in human history stands forth more prominently to every eye. Our idea of Socrates or Cæsar, of Napoleon or Washington, for distinctness of outline and vividness of impression, cannot be compared with that of Jesus. It is as transparent as

the light ; it is as unique as it is transparent ; it is as radiant with moral beauty and sublimity as it is original. And we may safely say, there is no one thought in the intellect of the world more definite—none which it has grasped with a stronger and fonder hold—than this conception of the personal character of the great founder of Christianity—Jesus the Son of man, Jesus the Son of God.

Accordingly we fix upon this sublime impersonation of immaculate virtue—this incarnation of Divinity in a sinless humanity—this living personal character of Jesus, as one of the chief attractions of the book of God. There is no such example to be found elsewhere in the history of men. There is no such conception, thus embodied and exemplified, in any other book of human literature. And if infidelity could prove that the Bible is all a fable, and religion all a dream ; that no such person as Jesus ever lived ; that the character is not real but fictitious—a mere creation of enthusiasm and romance : still the idea remains, the conception lives and can never die : it is there in the book, and it is here all over the world, bright and glorious like the light ; and even if it were a mere creation of genius, it is beyond all comparison, the most sublime and beautiful creation the world ever beheld.

In Jesus Christ we see reflected, as the moon reflects the sunlight, all the virtues that can be conceived of, as adorning the moral character of God. In his person we see Divine glory equally blended with human perfection. As we can gaze upon the sunlight with unblasted vision, when it comes to us from the face of the full orb of night, so may we look upon the bright beams of uncreated Divinity, as they shine with softened effulgence from the face of Jesus Christ. All the lights of celestial virtue beam forth in his character : all the glories of

Divinity and humanity cluster around his person. He is at once the highest model of human excellence, and the brightest manifestation of Divine perfection, which the world has ever seen exemplified in a living man. Nay, more, his character is the highest conception of these assembled virtues which the human mind has ever attained. It is all light without a shadow—all beauty without a spot—all gold without alloy—combining in one the peculiar virtues of both sexes, and all the essential attributes of God and man. Well might the ancient prophet describe him as “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.”

In the whole history of his life and character on earth, as given in the New Testament, there is such a beautiful blending of Divinity with humanity—such an exact equilibrium between all the circumstances of humility and grandeur—that the challenge may be safely made, “Prove him to be a man and we will prove him to be God : or prove him to be a God, and we will at once prove him a man.” These circumstances, which furnish one of the most touching and fruitful themes of pulpit eloquence have been beautifully grouped together by Maclaurin and other great preachers ; but perhaps by no one more strikingly than by Dr. Baker, in the following passage :

“See him at the grave of Lazarus ! He weeps like a man ; and then with authority, says, Lazarus ! come forth ! like a God. Approaching the barren fig-tree, he hungers, like a man ; and then, with a word, withers the fig-tree away, like a God. During a raging storm on the sea of Tiberias, he lay in the hinder part of the ship with his head upon a pillow—he slept like a man. Being called upon, he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, like a God. Having wrought a stupendous miracle, he goes into a mountain apart to pray, like a man, and at

the fourth watch of the night he comes to his disciples, walking upon the water, like a God. As a man he pays tribute money : as a God he causes a fish to bring him the tribute money. Nailed to the cross he suffers like a man. And yet in the midst of his sufferings he opens the gates of paradise to the dying thief like a God. In yonder sepulchre, the hope of Israel, wrapt in the winding sheet, lies pale and cold in death, like a man. But lo ! in the morning of the third day, by his own immortal energies, he burst the bars of death and rose triumphant, like a God. After the resurrection, he meets his disciples, takes a piece of broiled fish and of honeycomb and eats with them as a man. He then leads them out to Bethany and blesses them, and as he blesses them ascends in a cloud of radiant majesty, far above all heavens, a God confessed ! God is gone up with a shout ! The Lord with the sound of a trumpet."

On whatever side we behold him, his character is new and wonderful, unlike any other in history. As the Son of the Holy One, incarnate, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, there dwells in him "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,"—he is God manifest in the flesh. As the son of Man, born of a woman, there cluster around his character all those lineaments of grace and gentleness and sympathy, which make him a perfect exemplar to woman and helpless childhood, as he is to ripened manhood. As the Saviour of the world, the Prophet, Priest and King of human redemption, he possesses all the beauty and attractiveness of the most complete adaptation to our wants and woes, as guilty, helpless sinners. As a friend, brother and Redeemer, there is found in him every attribute, every qualification that the soul of man needs to atone for its guilt, and satisfy its longings after life and immortality. And as a man, tabernacling amongst men for

a season, we behold in his life and character all those noble traits of truth, justice, honor, wisdom, courage, integrity, fortitude, self-denial, and beneficence, which have made him a model of absolute perfection to all nations and generations of men.

“ Few and precious are the words which the lips of wisdom utter ;” but when did wisdom ever utter such words of eloquence and power as fell from the lips of him, who, on the testimony of his foes, “ spake as never man spake !” When did majesty ever lay aside its robes, and stoop from its throne with such graceful condescension and winning love, as when the Son of God preached the Gospel to the poor, and listened to the cry of men of low estate ? When did high, heroic courage, strong in the panoply of truth and duty, ever march more steadily onward to its goal, despite the opposition of earth and hell, than when Jesus of Nazareth gave his life for the salvation of the lost ? When did beneficence, like an angel of mercy descending from the skies, ever go forth on such a mission of good-will to the outcast and the perishing, as when this man of sorrows, who had not where to lay his head, trod the hills of Judea and the valleys of Galilee, in one long weary pilgrimage, to inaugurate charity among the virtues, and teach the world what no philosopher had ever taught, that “ it is more blessed to give than to receive !” And when before did our humanity ever clothe itself in such habiliments of celestial love and mercy, as when the sufferer of Calvary poured forth that dying prayer : “ Father, forgive them, they know not what they do ?”

“ The founder of Christianity,” says Dr. J. W. Alexander, “ stands forth in a character absolutely original and unique. The attempt was never made to trace it to any foregoing exemplar. Neither history nor fiction approaches to anything which could serve even as the germ of such a description. The pic-

ture is intensely and sublimely moral. With a reserve almost without a parallel, there is not a touch or color thrown in, to gratify even what might be considered a reasonable curiosity. Hence there is not a syllable respecting the outward figure, countenance or demeanor of our Lord."

Whence came this extraordinary manifestation of living character in the Son of Mary! Or if, as skepticism would suggest, it be not real, whence came this sublime conception of character so far surpassing the highest ideal of the poets and sages of ancient literature? Was it from heaven or of men? If from heaven, then the character was real, and the wonder is explained by the Divine origin of Christianity. But if of men, who shall explain the mystery? It is abundantly manifest, that until infidelity can account for the phenomenon of the character of Jesus, on grounds more satisfactory than those which derive it from heaven, it must stand as it always has stood, a strong and unanswerable vindication of the truth of Christianity. Says Dr. R. J. Breckenridge, in his admirable discourse on the Internal Evidence, "I do not see but that it is far more rational to admit, with all the writers of the book, that the entire conception they all had of the Son of God, was divinely communicated to them, than to suppose that any one of them could have originated and developed such a conception, much less that all of them could have wrought upon that glorious composition, each in a manner working out what the rest had left unfinished, and that the perfect work should have been what we now behold it. The entire idea of Jesus of Nazereth, taken as a whole, is as much superhuman as the alleged manner of his birth; and the working out of that idea is as miraculous as the incarnation."

Is there no charm then in a character like this? Shall men

admire, and weep over, the real or imaginary heroes of history and romance, and yet find nothing beautiful in the history, sublime in the virtue, and godlike in the character of Jesus of Nazareth? Has any poet or novelist ever painted an ideal of such perfection, or told a story of such tender and tragic interest? And shall we be told, that the book which has given the world this narrative, and originated this unique and brilliant conception, is not worthy to occupy the front rank of sublimity and genius in the literature of the world? Infidelity itself has bowed in admiring homage before the superior lustre of the life of Christ, and by the lips of Rousseau, has virtually confessed that there is a Divine inspiration in the book. "It is impossible," says he, "to rise from the reading of it (the Gospel), without feeling a moral improvement. Look at the books of the philosophers with all their pomp: how little they are, compared with this! Shall we say, that the history of the Gospel is a pure fiction? This is not the style of fiction; and the history of Socrates, which nobody doubts, rests upon less evidence than that of Jesus Christ. And after all, this is but shifting the difficulty, not answering it. The supposition that several persons had united to fabricate this book is more inconceivable than that one person should have supplied the subject of it. The spirit which it breathes, the morality which it inculcates, could never have been the invention of Jewish authors: and the Gospel possesses characters of truth so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing object than the hero."

But perhaps some one may say, "I do not see the fitness of this high eulogy on the Gospel, in its delineation of character. The character of Jesus is indeed original and beautiful, but are there not also original and beautiful descriptions of character

in Milton, in Shakspeare, in Walter Scott, and other great masters of the art of writing ?” Certainly : but as the perfection of all art is to conceal the art by which it is done, so that it shall appear to be nothing but nature itself, the wonder here is, how men who had no learning, and are known to have had no experience in the art of writing, could have reached its perfection so completely, as the Evangelists. The highest of all attainments in the art of delineation, as a recent critic well remarks—historic, poetic and dramatic delineation—is to set the character before us, without describing it at all, except by its deeds—just to set it in motion and let it act ; and so speak for itself, without note or comment from the writer. The easiest of all modes, and the least masterly, is the modern fashion of pen-painting adopted by our novelists, who compensate for deeds in the hero, by their own words of description, without which we should hardly know the character. The next lowest method is to set the persons to talking—talking to each other in dialogue, or to themselves in soliloquy or to some imaginary third person—and so revealing what is in them—what they have done or can do. The highest and most difficult of all methods is that of letting the outward actions of the life tell the inward story of the character. And that is the one adopted by all the sacred writers, especially by those who have set forth the character of Jesus. Who will say it was ever surpassed, or even equalled ? Whence this perfection ? The wonder is not merely, how the Evangelists could invent such a character as that of Jesus, but in case no original was before them, or even supposing there was, how they, unlettered, unartistic Jews, could describe it as they have done—by leaving it alone, to live and move, and teach and pray, and die, without one word of eulogy from them.

IV.—THE IDEA OF SPECIAL DIVINE INFLUENCE.

Our next illustration of moral beauty, revealed in the Scriptures, may be taken from the work ascribed to the agency of the Divine Spirit in the hearts of men. No reader of the Old Testament or the New can fail to see what prominence this great fact every where holds. It is one of the widest, most important, and most extraordinary facts of the book. The conception, of a special Divine inspiration, illumination, influence, agency, or whatever it may be named, is before us on every page. Besides the idea of a universal Divine Providence constantly exerting itself over the world, the Scriptures are full of another grand idea of like character—even that of an influence from God, direct and powerful, in the minds of men. The Scriptures uniformly refer their own existence to this agency. The sacred writers invariably ascribe all that is good in themselves, and all the moral good in the world, to this exalted source. The doctrine of Divine Providence is not more clearly revealed, than this great truth of special Divine influence. There are manifold forms of it—diversities of gifts, diversities of operations, differences of administrations—but in all, it is one and the same agency, whether called the Spirit, or the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, or the inspiration of the Almighty. To this influence, as the fountain-head, the Bible traces all the streams of Divine truth and grace and holiness that have ever flowed down into our apostate world. To this influence, as the efficient producing cause, the Bible refers all the phenomena of moral renovation and spiritual life that have ever been exhibited in human character. All the inspired revelations of Divine truth that make up the canon of Scripture ; all the mani-

festations of the spirit of prophecy in ancient times ; all the wonderful exhibitions of spiritual power on the day of Pentecost ; all the seasons of revival and all the cases of conversion and reformation that have marked the history of the church ; all the virtues and graces of holiness that have adorned the character of the Christian in every age and nation—all Divine truth, grace and holiness in the world, find their source and centre in this great idea of the word of God—the influence and agency of the Holy Ghost. All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit—the only true light to enlighten every man that cometh into the world.

Now without stopping to debate the evidences for the reality of this great doctrine, suppose we lay hold upon the bare conception as presented in the Bible, and contemplate it simply as an object of thought. Is it not manifestly one of sublimity and beauty, calculated to inspire the mind of him who holds it as the truth of God, with sentiments of the highest enthusiasm ? We have seen the glory of Divinity as it shines in the face of Immanuel. But here is a Divinity that stirs within ourselves, and may shine forth in all our Christian graces. “The spirit that I will give you shall be in you, and shall abide with you forever.” That Spirit which descended from heaven on the day of Pentecost, and has filled the church with glory, shall come to our relief and make his abode in our hearts. To the good man, struggling against manifold temptations, what thought can be more cheering, more sublime, than the inhabitation of the Spirit of God ? And will the Lord indeed dwell with men ? Shall these hearts be the subjects of Divine influence ? Shall these bodies be the dwelling-place of the Holy One ? Yes, this is the precise idea of the Spirit given in the Scriptures. “Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost ?” Beauti-

fully has it been said, that the Most High has two favorite dwelling-places—the one in Heaven, the other in the contrite heart.

Then let a man grasp this thought in all its fullness—let him take it as he finds it in the book of God, and believe it with all his heart—let him think, let him know, as he will know by an inward witness, that his own heart has been the subject of this mighty operation of God—let him feel that he carries about with him, in his daily walk and conversation, this Divine monitor, as an ever present helper, guide, comforter—and do you not see, how such a man is armed for the great battle of life with more than mortal armor? how he is elevated in the scale of being by the consciousness of such companionship with God? how this one great doctrine of Scripture has filled his mind with emotions which, in their very nature, are sublime and beautiful and glorious? how by being made partaker of the Divine nature, through the influence of the Spirit, he is at once allied with all that is high and holy in the spiritual and eternal world! The Bible knows no such thought as the deification of men, or the canonization of saints: but it gives us an infinitely grander thought in this descent of the Spirit into the bosom of the church—this blessed inhabitation of God in the heart of every regenerate man—this Divine light shining in the midst of a dark world.

What are all the apparitions and metamorphoses of gods and goddesses in classical poetry, compared with this mighty indwelling of the Holy Ghost, by which a sinner like Saul of Tarsus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, is transformed into an apostle of the Lamb; by which thousands have passed from spiritual darkness and death to the marvelous light of God's dear children; by which whole nations have been re-

claimed from barbarism and idolatry ; by which this sin-polluted world is to be ultimately disenthralled and redeemed ? If any one wishes to appreciate this thought in all its grandeur, let him read such a passage as Macaulay's description of the English Puritans—let him mark how the whole force of that gorgeous portraiture turns upon this one sublime idea of the Bible—the indwelling of the Spirit of God ; and let him remember that it is as true now of the humblest man who has been converted, as it was of the Puritans.

“ On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests they looked down with contempt : for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language ; nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged—on whose slightest actions the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest—who had been destined before heaven and earth were created to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen and flourished and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been rescued by no common deliverer, from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.”

Now it may not appear whether the eloquent essayist in this

passage approved, or even believed in, these high thoughts and feelings of the Puritans : but it is manifest that he writes as one who appreciates their unspeakable beauty and sublimity: and it is equally manifest, that all these lofty sentiments touching the worth and destiny of a soul redeemed, are the legitimate, logical offshoots of the grand Scriptural idea of the regenerating, sanctifying, indwelling Spirit of God. The fact may not be heralded amongst the great events of human history, the idea may not always find admirers in the walks of this world's literature—but a soul redeemed to God, restored to spiritual life, disenthralled from sin and Satan, prepared for immortal glory by a special Divine Influence, must ever stand as one of the most sublime and wonderful revelations of the Bible—one of the most beautiful of all its conceptions, one of the most blessed of all its facts. If there is grandeur in this description, it is because of the unutterable grandeur of the idea which the Bible has given to the world.

V.—THE CHURCH OF GOD.

Let us pass to another illustration. It is the idea of the Church or kingdom of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Nothing can be more certain than that there is a church in the world, that it is a Divine institution, and that the whole conception of it originated in the Scriptures. And whether we consider its origin, its design, its economy, its influence, or its destination, it is wholly unlike every other institution which has ever been founded amongst men. The Scriptural idea of it, is that of a kingdom, visible and invisible, whose sovereign lawgiver and head is Christ, or God in Christ, whose subjects are gathered from all nations and generations of men, whose

history embraces the whole course of time, whose theatre of action is first the earth and then the heavens, and whose final cause is the manifestation of the Divine glory to all the universe.

It is of this church that the prophet Daniel speaks, when interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar—"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." This is the "stone cut out of the mountains without hands," that should break in pieces the iron and the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, till it should become a great mountain itself and fill the whole earth. It is this that forms the subject of a subsequent sublime prophecy, when he says—"I saw in the night visions, and behold ! one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed." This is the kingdom which the apostle Paul calls the "Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," and of which he speaks in another place, saying—"God created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." This is that kingdom of heaven, or church of the Messiah, which after four thousand years of development and progress through rites and symbols, shadows and

prophecies, was at last fully organized and inaugurated by Christ himself, and placed upon a foundation of chartered right and duty and privilege, on which it shall stand, until the hour of its transition from earth to heaven, from the militant to the triumphant state.

Such is the conception of the church as revealed in the Scriptures, and in part exemplified through all past history. And the question for us now is, where shall we find in history a more magnificent conception? Look for a moment at the elements of moral grandeur which cluster around this venerable institution.

First is the element of a Divine origin. It is built upon the "foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Its origin dates from the beginning of the human race; its conception goes back to the eternal counsels of the Divine mind. At its last great inauguration, nearly two thousand years ago, its Divine founder exclaimed—"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The next element of grandeur is its universal character. It gathers its subjects from all the ranks of men—from all nations and races and generations of men. Its last grand commission to its ambassadors is—"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." No pent-up philosophy confined to the few—no exclusive system, bounded by zones and mountains, is ever suggested by the Scriptural idea of the church. Its provisions, its promises, its blessings are as wide as the world, as bountiful as the light of day, as universal as the all-surrounding air.

A third element is its irresistible moral power. Its subjects are all made willing in the day of God's power: but though free and voluntary, they are yet attached to their sovereign Head by

an allegiance which has no parallel amongst men. The weapons of its warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds. And they are as peaceful as they are mighty. It breathes peace on earth and good will to all men ; and yet its power is irresistible. The sublime language of the Master was, " My kingdom is not of this world." " Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." With the sword of the Spirit, in the simple majesty of truth, and in God's great name, it goes forth to wage an unceasing, uncompromising, universal battle against all the powers of sin, both human and infernal ; and still, in the strength of these alone, its march has been onward through the fires of ten thousand persecutions, conquering and to conquer. All other institutions and systems and kingdoms of antiquity have perished with the men who made them ; while the church of God renews her youth day by day. The more she has been pressed down and trampled in the dust by apostate men, and infidel nations, the more has she raised her head in triumphant glory.

And still another element of sublimity clustering around the idea of the church is that of duration, perpetual duration. It has come down to us across the graves of all past generations of men ; it shall embrace the whole onward sweep of time, till time shall end ; and then its orbit is to be projected amid those eternal cycles which shall map the new heavens and the new earth. The language of Divine promise addressed to the great Head of the Church is in such words as these—" Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." " They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous

flourish : and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

Men are accustomed to speak of the dignity of history. And truly there is a sublime moral grandeur in the spectacle of great states and nations as recorded on the historic page. You have perhaps read "Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," until your conceptions of human power and greatness have been expanded and ennobled by the study. But what is the Roman Empire, with its untold populations, its arts, and its arms, its learning and its laws, its history of more than twenty centuries from its origin to its downfall, compared with this vast commonwealth of the saints—this universal state of God—the church which at once pervades and comprehends all other states ; whose jurisdiction extends over all the land and all the sea ; whose history is coëval and coextensive with the race of man ; whose destiny it has been and still is to shine in a dark world, like the hallowed bush of Horeb, ever burning but never consumed ? Indeed, if there is an object of moral grandeur in the history of the world, it is to be found in the recorded and yet to be fulfilled history of the church of God, as developed in the Scriptures. It is the idea of Christ in history, reigning and ruling over all, till the last enemy shall be put under his feet.

VI.—THE COMMON BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

The next leading idea which we select from the mass of Scripture truths, as an object of moral beauty and sublimity, is the doctrine of man's common brotherhood, coupled with its two great essential corollaries, human equality and liberty. We believe that the world is more indebted to the Bible for

these sublime and glorious thoughts, than it has ever been willing to acknowledge. The Bible does not more distinctly reveal to us the relation in which we stand to God, as his creatures, than it does the relation in which we all stand to each other as fellow creatures. It is the relation of a common brotherhood—the idea of one vast family, of which God is the head and Father, extending through all generations, embracing all the races and nations of men. “God,” says the apostle to the philosophers of Athens, “hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the time before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation ; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us : for in him we live, and move, and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring.” In this sublime annunciation of truth, the doctrine of man’s common brotherhood is not only fully set forth, but placed upon an immovable basis, even that of a Divine origin. All men are brothers, because all men are children of one Father. Indeed the Bible, from first to last, binds all men into a common brotherhood by a double tie, and that the tie of blood—the blood of creation and the blood of redemption. Of one blood he hath made all nations of men : and by one blood, the priceless blood of Immanuel, he hath purchased redemption for all. A common origin and a common salvation, implying a common nature, constitute the extreme links of that chain which encircles all the tribes of men, and binds them in brotherhood around the eternal throne. So that if you ask why men are brothers, you have the double reason in that declaration of Scripture, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

Now this conception of the unity of the human race and consequent brotherhood of man, belongs in a special manner to the Scriptures. It is chiefly a revelation of the New Testament. It never was the received doctrine of any ancient system of philosophy. It has never been proclaimed on earth by any religion except that of the Bible. It is one of the grand original discoveries of the gospel of Christ, who broke down forever the old distinction between Jew and Gentile, when he said, "Go, teach all nations." It has never been a favorite doctrine, either with the philosophers on the one hand, or the despotic oppressors of men on the other. Although so clearly revealed in the book of God, and now so fully vindicated by the profoundest researches of modern science, it has had to fight its way against the continued assaults of scientific infidelity, and of baptized avarice and oppression. Men wishing to grind their fellow men under the iron heel of bondage, for purposes of gain or ambition, have striven to prove that it can be done in the august name of Christianity, and have denied that the doctrine of human brotherhood can be found in all her venerable charter. Men of science, on the other hand, even down to our own day, finding the doctrine there as plainly as they find anything, have admitted its existence, and then boldly joined issue on it, with the avowed purpose of giving the lie to the Bible, by proving the doctrine false.

But it is altogether aside from our present purpose to discuss its truth. We take it as it stands in the book—as one of the bold, original, magnificent conceptions of that sublime genius, or that Divine intelligence, which pervades all the Scriptures. Where shall we find any view of man so glorious, so august, so cheering, as that which binds all his families, all his generations, in one universal brotherhood of love—one heart beating at the

centre of humanity, one life-blood flowing through the veins of all nations, one immortal spirit bursting forth from every tabernacle of clay, fashioned after the image and likeness of God? Who does not feel, that such a view is immeasurably more sublime and ennobling, than that which infidelity, and selfish cupidity have been laboring so hard to establish in its place?

In this doctrine of human fraternity lies the last great hope of the world for universal equality and liberty. If all men of all nations and races are brothers of the same great family of God, as the Bible teaches, then every one ought to have a brother's portion in the inheritance of earthly blessings, as well as in the patrimony of immortality. And so, when the Bible doctrine comes to be fully understood and practised—when men come to understand their true relations to God and to one another—when, under the peaceful influence of the cross, they learn to love each other as children of one Father, and brethren of one family, they must become equals in all social, political, and religious rights—at least so far as equality is possible in a world of diversity and imperfection. Being thus constituted brothers and equals, in virtue of their common parentage in God, they will all ultimately rise to the dignity of freemen, even as they come to see that they have no right to degrade each other, and no interest in trampling each other in the dust. The Bible contemplates a period when nation shall not rise against nation, and man will no more need to vindicate his own liberties at the sacrifice of those of his fellow man. That consummation will be realized just in proportion as this sublime doctrine of man's common brotherhood takes possession of the heart of the world. Equality and freedom must grow out of man's fraternity; and it is for the Gospel of love to develop them, even as it delivers the world from the thralldom of sin. This is the grand Scrip-

tural idea of universal emancipation. If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. This is the only true theory, method, and hope of human liberty and equality. The battle-cry of oppressed humanity, the sublime watch-word of all human progress amongst the struggling nations, is, and ever must be, this divinely established trio of the word of God—Fraternity—Equality—Liberty ; not in the order of infidel France and Germany—“ Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” madly building human liberty on a foundation of sand ; but in the order of the Bible-reading, and God-fearing apostles of English and American revolutions—Fraternity first, and then Equality, and then Liberty, planting itself on the Rock of Ages. When the down-trodden nations of the earth shall once learn that the true interest of man must be sought in the name of God and truth : when they shall come to understand that they are all free and equal because they are brothers ; and brothers because the common sons of God : when they shall be able to build all their rights and their hopes upon God, and to defend them with the high and awful sanctions of the word of God ; then shall be realized the grand Scriptural conception of the common brotherhood, equality and liberty of man ; then shall be proclaimed that universal Jubilee of freedom which the Bible has from the beginning recognized and preached as the inherent and Divine birth-right of every nation and tribe and kindred of Adam’s race : then shall be brought to pass that glorious consummation of universal peace, order and good will amongst men, which Christianity has foretold as the result of her own Divine principles, which has been the theme of the earnest longings and midnight meditations of the master minds of all past ages ; for which the martyrs of civil and religious liberty in every land have poured out their life-blood on the scaffold and on the battle-field ; for

which the saints of God have been praying so long ; for which statesmen have so often planned, and patriots sighed in vain ; and for which even now thousands of the noblest men that tread the earth are suffering in the prisons of European despotism, or wandering in exile, their desolated homes appealing to heaven for justice, and their enslaved countries silently awaiting the trumpet call of their resurrection morning.

In a word, the one grand inspiring thought which we seek here to present, is, that the Bible is the true book of human liberty, the only book of hope for liberty, equality, and fraternity amongst men. Men and nations have thus far been successful in securing the prize of civil and religious freedom, for themselves and their posterity, just in proportion as they have stood by the book of God ; and as they have departed from it, they have failed. This is the only Divine charter on earth for the rights and liberties of man. This is the only rock on which he can make his stand against tyranny, temporal, spiritual, civil or infernal, with success. With this book only can he know his rights—and knowing, dare maintain them. And when all the world shall be filled with the knowledge of this book, then shall all the world be filled with moral beauty and glory, for there shall be but one vast family of brothers, equals, and freemen, walking in the light of the Lord. Is there any moral grandeur in thoughts like these ? 'Tis the Bible that reveals it.

VII.—THE DAY OF SACRED REST.

As an illustration of our general subject—the moral beauty and sublimity of the things revealed in the Scriptures—let us now take an object somewhat different from any of those yet

presented. It is the day of sacred rest, the Sabbath of God, as it is conceived of, and described, in the Bible. It has well been called the "Pearl of days"—"Heaven's antidote for the curse of labor." Instituted at the creation, and enforced by the high sanction of Divine example, incorporated into the memorabilia of the Decalogue, honored by the special encomiums of the prophets, and reënjined by the great Head of the church at the new dispensation, it has come down to us, with all its venerable associations, and its sacred authority, as an ordinance, "made for man"—an ordinance to be observed in its season to the end of time. It is unlike all other long-observed divisions of time. It has no natural index, like the day, the night, the year, to notch its periods as they pass. It is the "day which the Lord hath made." And yet it is an institution upon which we behold the inscription, "antiquity, universality, perpetuity."

In order to obtain a full perception of the moral beauty and glory of the Sabbath, we must look at it in its intention and design, as developed in the Bible : for no part of the world has ever yet fully realized the Scriptural conception of this day of sacred rest. We must look away from the Sabbath as it is now seen, in its partial observance, often shameful desecration, to the Sabbath as it ought to be, and as it would be, if universally observed according to the letter and spirit of the commandment. Even as it is, in the best parts of Christendom, in the rural parishes of England, in the highlands of Scotland and in many a quiet village of our own country, there is a peaceful glory around the Sabbath, that naturally lifts the thoughts to heaven. But what would it be, if the observance were universal, with no discordant element of business or worldly pleasure, to mar the grand idea of a world in repose, worshipping at Jehovah's feet ?

The best way to get the Scriptural conception of the Sabbath fully before our minds, is to suppose first a world without any Sabbath. Suppose there never had been a day of sacred rest, no conception of it, no approximation to it amongst men. Suppose no Sabbath sun had ever poured its peaceful, hallowed light over the toiling millions of earth. Picture to yourselves, not a single nation, such as France during the Reign of Terror, but a world laboring on forever, with no day of repose, no Sabbath of worship, no respite from work : work—work—work its only life-time. Think of men, women, and children, doomed to toil on, from day to day, the slaves of business, the drudges of labor, the worshipers and the victims of work—unending work. In the language of John Allan Quinton, “Think of labor thus going on, in one monotonous and eternal cycle—the limbs forever on the rack, the fingers forever plying, the eyeballs forever straining, the brow for ever sweating, the feet forever plodding, the brain for ever throbbing, the shoulders forever drooping, the loins forever aching, and the restless mind forever scheming. Think—as your imagination beholds the unvarying wheel of work, the tread-mill of labor, thus going round, and round, and round, without a change, without a pause, from morn to night, from moon to moon, and from year to year—think if you can, of the desolations that must follow this absolute reign of labor over the whole realm of time. Think of the beauty it would efface ; of the merry-heartedness it would extinguish ; of the giant strengths that it would tame ; of the resources of nature that it would exhaust ; of the aspirations it would crush ; of the sicknesses that it would breed ; of the projects it would wreck ; of the groans that it would extort, of the lives that it would immolate, and of the cheerless graves that it would prematurely dig ! See them, toiling and

moiling, sweating and fretting, grinding and hewing, weaving and spinning, strewing and gathering, sowing and reaping, razing and building, digging and planting, unloading and storing, striving and struggling ;—in the garden and in the field, in the granary and in the barn, in the factory and in the mill, in the warehouse and in the shop, on the mountain and in the ditch, on the road-side and in the wood, in the city and in the country, on the sea and on the shore, on the earth and in the earth, in days of brightness and days of gloom, in hours of sun and seasons of storm, in times of trouble and times of peace, in the heights of day and in the depths of night, through the savageness of winter and through the gentleness of spring, in the energy of youth and in the impotence of age, when health is merrily dancing in the blood, and when disease is eating up the strength, when death is in the lonely home, and when happy life encircles the hearth :—thus the wheel of labor would go round with the earth, and the children of industry, chained to its surface, must follow its ruinous circumvolutions, till exhausted by unnatural efforts, they relax their hold, drop off, and suddenly disappear ! Under the vassalage of such a gigantic oppressor as unrestricted labor, earth would rack with the sufferings of her offspring, while the all-absorbing prayer of her millions would be for Rest ! rest ! rest ! or the quiet slumber of the grave.”

Now, from this fearful picture of a world without a Sabbath, turn to contemplate the condition of man, when blest, not simply with the Sabbath as it is, but with that universal and perfect Sabbath which the Scriptures have depicted, and which is yet to reign on earth. Conceive of it as described by Isaiah, when men “ Shall call it a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable ; and shall honor him, not doing their own ways, nor

finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words." Conceive of it, not as some pagan saturnalia, or papal holiday, when man is released from toil only to run riot with feasting and frolic and debauchery, but as a season when man's thoughts shall be lifted to the skies, to hold communion with God. Conceive of all nations of the earth, resting from their labors, as God did when he made the world. Conceive of the whole animate creation, both man and beast, reposing in calm enjoyment after every six days' toil. Draw the picture of a world at rest—a world in devotion—a world remembering the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. In the eloquent words of Quinon again, "Go forth at early morning, and climb the side of an upland peak, contiguous to some thickly peopled city. Gaze eastward, southward, westward and northward—through the whole circuit travelled by the sun—and behold the delectable representation of Sabbath rest. Every sound breathes softer ; every tint gleams brighter : every scene seems fresher. Cast thy glance across the country—pass from field to field, from rill to river, from alp to glen, from hill to valley, from grove to grove, from one cluster of human dwellings to another, and read in every softened feature of nature, the sweet tranquillity of Sabbath rest ! Oh, precious day !—the workman's jubilee—the slave's release—the shield of servitude—the antidote of weariness—the suspension of the curse ! How it smoothes the brow of care ! How it brightens the countenance of gloom ! How it braces the enervated limbs of labor ! How it revives the drooping spirit of **despair** ! How it gives wings to the clogged affections and aspirations to the soul ! How it pours some drops of sweetness on the bitterest lot, and sheds some gleams of sunshine athwart the saddest heart ! How it lifts the groveller from his low pursuits, and fills him with a noble self-respect !

How it extinguishes the jealousies and rivalries of week-day occupations, and links men's hearts in the bonds of brotherhood." Such in part is the contrast, between a world without, and a world with, the day of sacred rest, as drawn by the author of the "Prize Essay on the Sabbath ;" and well may we too say, in the words of his beautiful motto from Herbert—

" Oh, day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend, and with his blood ;
The couch of time ; care's balm and bay :
The week were dark but for thy light :
Thy torch doth show the way."

And if such be the true Scriptural conception of the Lord's day—the beau-ideal of Sabbatical rest painted by the pencil of inspiration—where shall we find in human literature a grander, nobler, lovelier thought ? But this thought, in all its length and breadth, the world owes to the book of God alone.

VIII.—THE MILLENNIUM.

The next object of contemplation which we select from the Scriptures, as one calculated to excite emotions of sublimity and grandeur in the mind, is the Millennium or latter-day glory—the future golden age—the last dispensation of the world's history, supposed to be a thousand years, in which the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, and all nations shall dwell in safety, plenty and peace. Indeed we take here a twofold object for illustration—embracing two distinct and glorious con-

ceptions, which however we may survey at one view—namely the conversion of the world, and the subsequent reign of righteousness upon it.

It is amongst the clearest, and certainly the most blessed and joyful, of all the revelations of the book of God, that there is a time coming, we cannot tell how distant nor yet how near—but a time of universal righteousness and peace and good will on earth ; when the Gospel shall prevail from the rising to the setting sun ; when all flesh shall see the salvation of God and walk in the light of his countenance ; when there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain : when the waste place shall be a fruitful field, and every desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose ; when Zion's walls shall be salvation, her gates praise, and God her glory ; when Jew and Gentile shall meet together, and bond and free embrace each other as brothers ; when the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High ; when they shall beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more ; when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them ; when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea ; when that “ old serpent, the Devil and Satan,” who has deceived the nations so long, shall be bound a thousand years and cast into the bottomless pit, and this fair planet, no longer the dwelling place of sin, shall roll on amid the stars, a habitation of holiness, a paradise of glory and blessedness, a “ new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Such is the period which we call the Millennium or latter-day glory, without being able to define when or how it will begin, when or where it shall end. It is enough for us that it is to be ; that its coming is amongst the sure decrees of Jehovah ; that it is foretold and anticipated throughout the entire predictions of the book of God. Such is the prospect of future and ultimate glory which, from the beginning to the present hour, has cheered the hopes and fired the zeal of the people of God. Such is the sublime vision of her destiny, which the Christian church, by the eye of faith and with the telescope of Divine promise, has been able to see in the darkest hour of tribulation, looming up grandly before her, like the orb of day through the scattered mists of the morning. Such is the voice of prophecy and of hope, which she has ever heard, crying to her from the future and from the heavens, saying : " Arise ! shine ! for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee." It is the image of a perfect day, without a mist, without a cloud, without a storm, a noontide of glory, a picture of universal liberty, universal intelligence, universal happiness. No image was ever more distinctly before the human mind, no conception was ever more indelibly impressed on the heart of the church, no object ever made a stronger appeal to her faith, her hope, her enthusiasm, than this belief, this anticipation of the conversion of the world, and the final triumph of Christianity. On the sure testimony of heaven we know, that whatever disasters may betide her, whatever labors must be endured, or dangers encountered, or however long the time may be delayed, the day of her redemption shall come, the whole world shall be converted, and Christ shall reign from sea to sea, from pole to pole.

This is the idea which the Bible gives us, of the millennial

or latter-day glory. And who shall be able, before the time, adequately to measure the moral grandeur of a thought like this? A world evangelized, a world emancipated from sin, a world redeemed to God? What vocabulary of past ages, what images of human greatness shall furnish terms adequate to set before us the untold magnificence of such a period, or to express the full sublimity of such a conception? And compared with all the other works that men have done beneath the sun—the victories of war, the pursuits of ambition, the achievements of art, the building of cities, the founding of empires, the discoveries of science, how does the Missionary enterprise, founded as it is upon the Divine promise of the final success of the Gospel, catching enthusiasm from the sublime conception of a world redeemed, and going forth in God's great name to accomplish the work—how does the Missionary enterprise rise up before us in all its world-wide majesty, its unutterable God-like grandeur! But this conception from first to last is derived from the Bible.

If the enterprise should fail at last, or success be deferred for thousands of years, infidelity itself must still admit, not only the existence of the thought, but the heroic daring of the purpose, and the matchless moral sublimity of the effort, to convert and save the world; infidelity can never deny, whatever be the issue, that the bare conception of such a work does infinite honor to that sublime intelligence which first developed it, and to that generous, noble impulse, which through all ages, has been yearning for its realization. If Christianity should be doomed at last to die a martyr in this infidel world, as so many of her followers have done, and infidelity be left alone to dig her grave and write her epitaph, still the truth must stand forever confessed, that the largest, grandest, noblest enterprise of man, was

that which Christianity undertook when she aimed to evangelize the world.

But no martyr's death shall be her destiny. No infidel foe shall ever write her epitaph. The vigor of immortal youth is ever in her footsteps. The life-blood of an infinite energy is coursing through all her veins, and conquest is written with God's own hand upon her brow. In the words of one of her heroic sons, Sylvester Larned—"Christianity is on her march, and nothing will stop it. She is moving forward ; and whoever opposes her progress will only be crushed to pieces. She throws off the puny efforts of Infidelity, as the majestic lion shakes from his mane the dew-drops of the morning. She asks no armistice or compromise from her enemies ; if they will fall into the magnificent procession she is leading, they may yet be received : if not, they must abide the issue. Methinks the celestial bands are at this moment waiting to welcome her approach to her native skies. Methinks the seventh angel has the trumpet to his lips, and is preparing to sound Hallelujah !—for the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

IX.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

But looking still further onward in the course of time, beyond the millennium and beyond the tomb, we behold another revelation of sublimity and glory peculiar to the book of God. It is the Resurrection of the dead. Through the far reaching predictions of the Old Testament and the New, there rises up, before the eye of faith, a vision of more than mortal grandeur—a picture of beauty, of wonder and yet of awe-in-

spiring mystery, such as no earthly pencil can ever transcribe, no human imagination fully grasp. It is the vision of a resurrection morning—the idea of a world reanimated—the spectacle of the buried generations of men awaking and starting forth from the long sleep of the grave—“this corruptible putting on incorruption and this mortal immortality.” It is that which Daniel beheld in his ancient night visions—“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” It is that of which Paul writes—“Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” It is that of which He, who is the “Resurrection and the Life,” speaks—“Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

The doctrine of a universal resurrection of the dead, is one of the peculiar, distinctive, and fundamental doctrines of the Bible. Though once rejected and laughed to scorn by the philosophers of Greece, it is now established on as firm and broad a basis, in the convictions of men, as Christianity itself. From being derided at first as a fable, it has now become the loved and cherished belief of the whole civilized world, giving inspiration to all its hopes, diffusing glory over all its literature. The immortality of the soul, does not stand upon a

stronger basis of belief, than the resurrection of the body. It stands attested, first, by the sure promise of God, reiterated throughout the Scriptures, and secondly by the incontrovertible historical fact, that Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and became the first fruits of them that slept.

But it is not so much the proof of the doctrine, as it is the sublimity and beauty of the conception, of a general resurrection from the dead, that we are now concerned to notice. What a compensation for all the ravages of disease, for all the inroads of suffering and decay, for all the horrors of death, is found in the fact, that the human body shall be raised immortal and incorruptible—that the gathered trophies of the grave shall be reconquered and brought back again—that death shall be swallowed up in victory—that the last great enemy of man shall die ! Where shall we find words, in the Bible or out of it, to utter the immeasurable glory and grandeur of that spectacle which the universe is yet to see, when the archangel's trumpet and the voice of God shall call the slumbering nations of the dead from their tombs ? If it would have been sublime and glorious to stand at the grave of Lazarus—to hear the summons, “Lazarus ! come forth,” and to see a single man, that had been dead four days, walk forth again in all the fullness of life : what shall it be to stand upon the earth at the latter day, to behold the countless generations of Adam, bursting all the bands of death, rising into newness of life, and putting on those forms of immortality, which soul and body shall wear forever ? What imagination shall paint, what poet or prophet's pen describe the glories, the wonders, the brightness, the beauty, the grandeur of that morning ! when on every hill and in every valley, from every mountain, rock and river, from every isle and ocean, from every desert-waste and every forest solitude, and

every crowded city on earth, the dead shall live again ! the good to die no more ! One day—one hour shall repeople the earth with all her children, and restore the ruins of thousands of years !

“See truth, love, and mercy in triumph descending,
And nature all glowing in Eden’s first bloom :
On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.”

There is no theme which inspires the sacred writers with a higher enthusiasm, than this doctrine of the resurrection. And well it may. The question of the sorrowing patriarch—“If a man die, shall he live again?” is one that comes home to every human heart. All that we hold dear on earth is involved in that question. All that we hope for hereafter is at stake upon the answer. We stand by the death-bed of our fondest friends—we bid them what appears to be a last farewell—we follow them to their cold and silent resting-place in the grave, as others will soon follow us. “We call, but they answer not again !” Bereaved, astounded, stricken nature asks, have they gone forever—shall we see them no more ? Has that curiously and wonderfully made body—“the human form divine,”—perished ? That brow of beauty, “the dome of thought and palace of the soul”—that eye of genius, that tongue of eloquence, that form radiant with celestial fires—the hand that could execute, the heart that could beat in fondness, the intellect that could grasp the laws of worlds and systems, the imagination that could conceive every varying aspect of beauty and grandeur, the spirit that so often aspired after God and glory—are all these forever buried in the dust ? No ! it cannot be ! All nature answers, No ! The word of God, from the beginning to

the end, answers No ! He, who is the " Resurrection and the Life," who gave his own life for the life of the world, with a sublimity of utterance never before heard at the grave, answers, No ! " Thy brother shall rise again." We must die—all die, because Adam sinned ! But since Christ has died, and risen from the dead, we die only to live again. Mortality and immortality, alike, belong to man.

" An angel's arm can't snatch him from the grave,
Legions of angels can't confine him there."

And yet there are men, aspiring to be called masters of taste and genius, who turn away from the Scriptures, as if no beauty or grandeur could be found in these Divine revelations. But if the doctrine of a universal resurrection of the dead be not sublime—as sublime as it is precious—it would be hard to tell, where, in all the realms of human thought, sublimity holds her dwelling-place. The real masters of taste and eloquence have not thought so ; but have admired and adored, as at the feet of Jesus, they have drunk in this vast and glorious conception. In high and holy meditation, the author of the " Night Thoughts," utters his most ecstatic strains, when, in view of the resurrection of Christ, he exclaims—

" Hear, O ye nations ! hear it, O ye dead !

He rose ! He rose ! He burst the bars of death !

——Shout Earth and Heaven !

This sum of good to man : whose nature then

Took wing, and mounted with Him from the tomb !

Then, then I rose : then first humanity

Triumphant passed the crystal ports of light,

Stupendous guest ! and seized eternal youth."

X.—THE LAST JUDGMENT.

Closely allied, in the Scriptures, to the conception of the resurrection of the dead, and immediately consequent upon it, stands another revelation of awful, unapproachable grandeur. It is the idea, now accepted by all men, of a final Judgment of quick and dead. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the Judgment." "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." It is called in Scripture, "The judgment of the great day." And it is not inappropriate to apply to it two other Scriptural titles—"The great day of God Almighty," "The great day of his wrath." For God himself, in the person of Christ, is to sit upon the throne of Judgment; "and before him shall be gathered all nations." It is the day in which justice is to be publicly executed upon men and angels—the day for which all other days were made, when all the inequalities of time shall be adjusted, all the mysteries of Providence cleared up—the point from which all the cycles of eternity shall take their departure. It is the day which shall wind up the drama of man's terrestrial existence, exhibit a God in grandeur, a world on fire, and a universe assembled to behold the scene—the day which shall write upon the archives of eternity, "Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned, and God's eternal government approved."

"When shriveling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead."

Now, you may have grown familiar with the most striking illustrations of grandeur in nature, in history, in art ; you may have walked amid the splendor of courts, or gazed upon the dread scenery of battles, or pictured to your imagination the vast array of gathering millions, all impelled by one great emotion. But where amongst the productions of art, or the records of history, or the images of nature, will you find any scene adequate to illustrate the awful, unapproachable sublimity of the judgment day ?

Suppose you could have stood upon an eminence and looked down upon the armies of Xerxes, as upon one wide sea of living, heaving humanity ; and reflected as he did, that in less than a century, all those millions should be still and silent in the dust. Suppose you could have commanded a view of Navarino, or of Trafalgar, when the hottest vials of human wrath were poured forth for the mastery of the hour ; or surveyed the scene at Waterloo, where nations mingled in the strife, and where the fate of Europe trembled on the point of the bayonet. How would language fail to express the overwhelming emotions excited by such scenes ! But what are all these to the mighty gatherings, the dread issues, and the high emotions, of the judgment day ! Perhaps you have gazed upon that sublime master-piece of art, West's picture of "Death on the Pale Horse," founded upon a single verse in the book of Revelation. Did you mark well that fearful impersonation of irresistible might and fury—that impetuous steed, trampling upon his slaughtered and dying victims, manhood in its prime and woman in her beauty, childhood in its innocence and decrepid old age—that ghastly rider with his brow of thunder, his eye of fire, his look of vengeance, his uplifted hands scattering arrows, fire-brands and death, his long dark retinue of demons, gorgons

dire, and hydra-headed monsters, "fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell?" And did you not stand, mute and spell-bound before the awful, mysterious grandeur of such a picture? But what is "Death on the Pale Horse," could you even face the reality, compared with the scenes of the last judgment?

You, perhaps, have read Macaulay's magnificent description of that august assemblage (such as no other nation but England could have produced), which sat upon the trial of Warren Hastings—when all that was dignified in high birth and official station—all that was profound in legal wisdom, brilliant in wit and beauty, commanding in eloquence, rich and powerful in the gorgeous paraphernalia of a titled nobility—the statesmen, jurists, orators, philosophers, heroes, high-born ladies, and nobles of the earth—were gathered together for the hearing and the adjudication of the great cause: when, before all that vast, and brilliant auditory, the great orator—the expounder of English law, the champion of English justice—said with uplifted hand and solemn voice: "I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors. I impeach him in the name of the House of Commons, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honor he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trampled in the dust, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself; in the name of both sexes; in the name of every age and of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all."

Who can fail to appreciate the moral grandeur of a scene like this? Who can read of it, even now, without partaking somewhat of the deep and powerful emotions which filled the heart of every actor and spectator on that great trial? But

what was that august assembly, with all its pomp and power, its absorbing interest and its mighty issues, the wisdom of Burke, the eloquence of Sheridan, the fate of Hastings, compared with that day of final, irreversible decision, in which we are all to stand before the judgment seat, not as spectators but as actors ; when, in the presence of an assembled universe, in the presence of God the judge, the accusing angel shall lift up his hand, and in the name of heaven's everlasting law, impeach the sinner of high crimes and misdemeanors against the government of God ! when the righteous and the wicked shall part to meet no more ! when, from the great tribunal, shall go forth the sentence to those upon the right hand, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and to those upon the left, " Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels !" when the one shall go away into everlasting punishment, the other into life eternal !

It has ever seemed to us, that if there is a conception of unutterable sublimity shadowed forth in the language of mortal tongues, it is to be found in St. John's vision of the last judgment—" And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged, every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever

was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Surely if there be sublimity any where, it is in the book of God.

XI.—THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

Let us turn now to another object of surpassing beauty and glory revealed in the Scriptures. It is the idea of Heaven—the Christian Paradise—the Spiritual, Eternal world: "the House of many mansions," "the City that hath foundations whose maker and builder is God," the New Jerusalem above, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," the high and holy Mount Zion, whose streets of gold, whose gates of pearl, whose walls of precious stone, "had no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

It is not needful that we should stop to expatiate on the moral beauty and sublimity of the Scriptural conception of heaven. It would be a boundless theme. There is a glory here too high for mortal tongues, too bright for mortal vision. The very word "Heaven," wherever the Bible has been translated into the languages of earth, has become the highest expression of all that is lovely, all that is pure, all that is joyous, blessed, glorious. When thought labors, and imagination breaks down, when all terms of beauty are exhausted, and all images of earthly grandeur fail—when the eye cannot see, nor the ear hear, nor the heart conceive, and the tongue can no further express—we are accustomed to shadow forth all the rest by one word—Heaven! The living know no sweeter phrase: and when the thoughts of the dying have passed from all sublunary things, the last inspiring word that lingers on their

stammering tongues, is still—Heaven ! the Heaven of the Bible ! There is perhaps no point at which the religion of the Bible more signally evinces its superiority over every thing else that men have called religion, than in this sublime, and glorious revelation of the heavenly world. The highest conceptions which the old Greeks had of Mount Olympus or of the Elysian Fields, the sensual paradise of Mohammed, the future “ hunting-grounds ” of the Indian, the spheres and transmigrations of ancient and modern paganism—how low, grovelling, and contemptible are they all, compared with the exalted spiritual heaven of Christianity !

“ Every thing in a nation,” remarks Professor Gaussen, “ may be measured by one standard ; the height of their heaven. If their heaven is low, every thing here on earth feels its debasing influences : every thing at once becomes more limited and more grovelling ; the future becomes more circumscribed : patriotism is materialized, generous traditions are engulfed, the moral sense becomes effeminated, the worship of self alone is exalted, and all conservative principles depart, one after another.”

Now it is the peculiar glory of Christianity to have revealed the highest, holiest heaven which the world has ever known or the mind of man conceived. Every element of moral beauty and grandeur clusters around the final abode of the blessed. The whole creation of God was beautiful and good, as it came from his almighty hand. The primeval paradise, was doubtless beautiful and glorious. The earth, when decked in its vernal bloom, still retains something of its original beauty and glory, notwithstanding all the desolations of sin and death. But what was Eden in all its glory, what is earth at its best estate, compared with the dwelling-place of God and glorified spirits—the

home of all moral, spiritual, Divine perfection ! Well may we call it “ the better land,” and its children a “ happy band.” How many a weary pilgrim through life’s great wilderness has been cheered and comforted in the prospect of reaching that better land ! How many a poor tempest-tossed voyager on life’s great ocean, has girded himself with new strength at the thought of that haven of immortal rest ! How many voices of the living and the dead are ever cheering us onward to that “ El Dorado,” of human hope—that “ Ultima Thule,” of perfect fruition—that Canaan of all the promises ! How many a mourner in Zion has caught a glimpse of that better land !

“ Look up ! there hope
 To meet again in that pure clime where blooms
 The Tree of Life unfadingly—blest clime !
 Where evermore shall rest the true and good
 Beneath the shadow of the central throne.
 How calmly rest ! where every storm is hushed
 To peace, and cloudless skies are beautified
 With everlasting day ! soft is the light
 That glances on their brows, and pure the gales
 That breathe their music there—the light, the breath,
 The melody of Heaven.”

Look for a moment at the elements of moral beauty and sublimity, associated with the Scriptural representation of heaven. It is a place of rest—the saint’s everlasting rest ! And how sweet is rest to the heavy-laden ! “ They rest from their labors and their works do follow them.” There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are evermore at rest. It is a place of holiness—immaculate holiness. “ There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth or worketh abomination or maketh a lie.” Its employments are all holy, its inhabitants

are all sinless. Who are those before the throne, clothed in white raiment, having palms in their hands? "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is a place of knowledge—endless growth in the knowledge of God, his attributes, his works, his ways, and all his creatures. Here we see through a glass darkly ; but there face to face. Here we know in part, and we understand in part, but there we shall know even as we are known. It is a place of society—companionship with God, with angels, with just men made perfect. "And I beheld, and lo ! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." It is a place of joy and fruition in the presence of the Lord. "And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps ; and they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne." "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away." "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It is a place of immortal life—an endless existence, "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Eternity is stamped upon all the joys of heaven. And what a thought of grandeur is—Eternity ! What duration lies unfolded beneath its endless years ? Eternity ! without a shore, without a bound—without one waning star, without one setting sun, without one falling leaf ! What sights of wonder may be seen : what heights of grandeur may be scaled : what deeds of glory may be done : what fields of knowledge may be scanned : what

mysteries of God and nature solved : what years of bliss enjoyed, or nights of woe endured, during the long life-time of eternity ! Could you take the wings of morning light and travel to the utmost verge of day—to the point which no thought of man or flight of angel hath ever reached—could you, from that point and with that radius, walk slow paced and step by step, the outer circumference of the universe, still you would have no adequate measure of the long life-time of eternity. Even then, when the weary circuit was done, and had been repeated again and again—to borrow the words of another—“ the clock of Eternity would not have struck one !” It was a sublime conception of Napoleon, when on the eve of battle at the base of the Pyramids, he reminded his soldiers, that from those lofty summits forty centuries looked down to behold their actions ! But what are forty centuries with all their deeds of glory, forty times told, to the long life-time of eternity—“ boundless, endless, and sublime,”—the ocean of existence !

“ Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,
Such as creation’s dawn beheld, thou rollest now.”

And yet men in their incredulity and folly, have asked, “ Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth ?” any thing noble, any thing great, any thing worthy of the homage of the wise ? We have only to ask, in reply, is there any thing sublime and beautiful in heaven—any thing precious in the boon of immortal life—anything grand in the universe of God ? If so, come and see ; it shall be found here also, in the book of God. What would the world be, and what would life be to man, without the hope of heaven ? What would man himself be without the doctrine of immortality, to compensate for the desolations of

death, and to supplement his present narrow existence? And is death an eternal sleep, alike to the wicked and the holy? Is the conception of heaven all a dream, intended to deceive us? Is there no rest for the weary but in the grave—no abode of blessedness and glory for the good and true? Take away the Bible, and who shall assure us of a heaven? Who shall tell us of Elysian Fields, or classic fables, as the ground of our future hopes? Take away the Bible, and you have taken away the only heaven of which we have any certain knowledge, the only heaven that a good man would care to live, or dare to die for. Take away the Bible, and you have robbed us of our all—you have left us this feverish dream of life, you have chained us to the world and sin and death—you have dug the grave of all our fondest, sublimest hopes—and sent us to lie down in the dust, saying to corruption—“Thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.”

“O earth! thou beauteous form of emptiness!
 Can'st thou presume to satisfy or calm
 The ceaseless yearnings of the deathless soul?
 Can'st thou presume to hold, in thy weak grasp,
 The proud aspirant to the crown of life?
 And who are those that love thy dust so well,
 That they would riot there! there breathe their last!
 There stretch themselves in everlasting sleep!
 They raise the hand with impious scoffs and swear—
 The land from which they sprang is but a dream!
 A dream!—By yonder clouds that catch the glow
 Of Paradise—by yonder lights that flash
 Upon its towers—by yonder floods that dash
 Against its walls—by all the signs above,
 And by the deep, low voice within—'tis false!
 False! shout the cherubim before the throne:

The demons mutter from beneath—'Tis false !
 The ceaseless thunder of the train of worlds
 Proclaims it false ; and the last lingering voice
 Of nature's dying music whispers, false."

XII.—THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION.

Take yet another, and the last illustration we shall offer ; it is the Scheme of Redemption, or plan of salvation, as it stands unfolded in all the Scriptures. This manifestly is the great essential theme of our theology, the central truth of Christianity, around which all others revolve as the planets around the sun. This brings us directly to the cross—to the incarnate Deity who suffered there—to the ample and amazing atonement for sin, which was there made. It is not our purpose at present, however, in speaking of the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, to discuss its theological bearings, or to expound its saving merits ; but simply to hold it up for your contemplation as an object of infinite beauty and grandeur. It is the one peculiar and exalted conception that runs through every chapter of the book of God, and gives to all its revelations the concinnity and compactness of a perfect science. We call it the scheme of redemption, or the economy of grace, or the plan of salvation, or the method which God has devised, and by which he proposes to rescue the guilty and lost soul. It is called in Scripture the "Way of Life." But, by whatever name we designate it, it is a perfect and Divine system—consistent in all its parts, complete in all its provisions, and so distinctly drawn, in all its great outlines, that, "the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein." It was finished when the Son of God expired on the cross ; it

stood before the world fully revealed when the last angel of the Apocalypse closed the canon of inspiration. Before its sublime and glorious doctrines, all the great intellects that have adorned the annals of the church—from Paul to Augustine, from Augustine to Calvin, from Calvin to Chalmers—have bowed in profound, admiring homage. It is a scheme of infinite wisdom and infinite grace, alike worthy of God and worthy of man's acceptance. It brings salvation to man, and a rich revenue of glory to God. By its mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Into its deep mysteries the angels desire to look. And in view of some of its great characteristics, the apostle exclaims—"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out !"

The atonement of Christ, or the redemption of the soul from sin and death by the blood of the cross, is represented in the Scriptures as a great salvation and a great mystery, as the glad tidings of great joy to all nations, and the glorious gospel of the grace of God. The sacred writers speak of it as the power of God and the wisdom of God ; and when they desire to glory in nothing save the cross of Christ, they evidently feel that their doctrine is as sublime and beautiful, as it is true and precious. We have only to look upon its outlines, to see the exceeding glory and beauty and moral grandeur of this great salvation.

First, the scheme is all of God.—Originating in the counsels of eternal wisdom, flowing from the fullness of the Father's love, it was accomplished by the voluntary obedience and sacrifice of the Son, and it is applied to man by the saving influences of the Holy Ghost. It is a Divine and perfect salvation. Next, its adaptation to man, as a remedy, is complete and glorious. It saves him when there was no arm to save him ; when he had

no power or even purpose to save himself—saves him from all his enemies, and from his own suicidal hand. It saves him in his impotence—saves him from all his woes—saves him notwithstanding all his guilt. It is offered to him without money and without price. Its conditions are the lowest and the simplest that could consist with the glory of God, or the well-being of his moral creatures. It is a salvation all of grace, free, sovereign, unmerited grace. Another element of moral beauty and grandeur belonging to the salvation of the cross, is seen in the greatness of the boon which it confers on man. It transforms the child of woe, the slave of sin, the rebel against God, into an heir of glory. It releases him from the wrath and curse of a violated law ; it restores to him the lost image of his Maker ; it raises him from the death of sin ; and instead of the pains of hell which would have been his portion forever, it gives him a title, clear and sure, to eternal life in the Paradise of God. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God.” Again, the exceeding glory of this salvation by the cross is exhibited in yet another fact—that it binds all its subjects in willing, grateful and eternal homage to the person of their Divine Redeemer. It thus secures, and that beyond the possibility of a failure, that love to God, and to all that bear the image of God, which is the fulfilling of the Divine law, which, in man, is the counterpart of the Divine character, and which constitutes the harmony and happiness of heaven. And still farther, we behold an exceeding beauty and glory in the grand ultimate design or final cause of this salvation. The gospel of Christ proposes a remedy for the lost—it seeks to save a multitude of souls from everlasting death. That is its object—its sublime and beneficent purpose, as it relates to man. But it has an infinitely

higher end and aim in relation to God. Its grand, ulterior and eternal purpose, is to glorify God—to manifest to all the moral intelligent universe, by the redemption of man, the wisdom, grace and power of the infinitely perfect God. It seeks to save man and make him holy, that he may attain the chief end of his existence, which is “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Such are the essential features of the Gospel : such is the sublime doctrine of salvation by grace through the death of the cross. Is there nothing wonderful, nothing beautiful and god-like in such a theme ? Is there nothing attractive to you in the theory, nothing precious in the story of the cross ? Is there no divinity that “stirs within,” which shall win your admiring and adoring love to this Divinity that shines so fully from the cross ? Is it nothing to you that infinite wisdom, eternal love, and almighty power have all combined to perfect a remedial system for the salvation of our ruined race ; and that all these concentrate in the cross ?

“The world is full of proof,” says Dr. Spring in his beautiful book—“The Attraction of the Cross”—“The world is full of proof of the intense interest with which the giddy and thoughtless have contemplated the cross, and the devout gloried in it. No minister of the Gospel ever rehearsed the narrative without a listening auditory ; no mother ever sang it over the pillow of her babe without tenderness ; no child ever read it without a throbbing heart. No living man ever perused it with indifference ; no dying man ever listened to it without emotion. The cross will be remembered when every thing else is forgotten. It has intrinsic power ; and God himself has invested it with attractions peculiarly its own. The Scriptures point to the cross, and say, ‘Behold the Lamb of God !’ The most emphatic

announcement they make is—'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!' The brightest and most wondrous vision of John, of all he beheld on earth, when lightened by the glory of the descending angel, and of all he beheld in heaven, was that of which he says—'I beheld, and lo! in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain!' Nothing will interest you like the cross. Nothing can do for you what the cross has done."

"He that stands beneath the cross," says Dr. Thornwell, "and understands the scene, dares not sin—not because there is a hell beneath him, or an angry God above him, but because holiness is felt to reign there—the ground on which he treads is sacred—the glory of the Lord encircles him, and like Moses, he must remove the shoes from his feet. The cross is a venerable spot; I love to linger around it, not merely that I may read my title to everlasting life, but that I may study the greatness of God. I use the term advisedly. God never appears to be so truly great, so intensely holy, as when, from the pure energy of principle, he gives himself in the person of his Son, to die, rather than that his character should be impugned. Who dares prevaricate with moral distinctions, and talk of death as a greater evil than dishonor, when God, the Mighty Maker, died rather than that truth or justice should be compromised? Who, at the foot of Calvary, can pronounce sin to be a slight evil? Here then lies the most impressive sanction of Revelation."

But let this suffice. We have been endeavoring to show what conceptions of spiritual and immortal beauty, what objects of intellectual and moral grandeur the book of God reveals to us. And surely our main proposition—that it does contain such

things in their highest glory—is abundantly sustained. We have singled out for illustration, twelve distinct examples—the Divine existence, the Providence of God, the personal character of Christ, the doctrine of special Divine influence, the church of God, the common brotherhood of man, the day of sacred rest, the Millennium, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the heavenly world, and the scheme of redemption. It is manifest, that we might multiply such illustrations to almost any extent. For it is the prerogative of the word of God to turn every thing which it touches into gold—to invest all other things with the glory of the Lord. All its revelations are either inherently or relatively sublime. By taking hold upon the soul, upon eternity and upon God, they at once take hold upon all the elements of moral beauty and grandeur. Nothing can be low or insignificant, which affects the well-being of the universe, which concerns the eternal destiny of man, which relates to the interests of virtue, human, angelic or Divine. All the revelations of the Bible therefore are either grand in themselves, or they borrow grandeur from the great things with which they stand connected. And instead of asking what there is in the Bible entitled to the attributes of greatness, it would be far more rational to ask, where else in the literature of the world, we shall find any thing possessing sublimity and beauty by a title like that of the Bible—a claim that shall stand good, when this earth shall be dissolved and these heavens shall melt with fervent heat. The grass withereth, the flower faileth ;
BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDETH FOREVER !

XIII.—RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

We have now completed our task. We have walked about Zion and marked her bulwarks. We have surveyed the glory of the Outer Temple. We have endeavored to show that the study of the Scriptures, as containing the finest models of taste, the true elements of literature and science, and the grand fundamental facts of religion, is essential to all correct education in youth, all sound learning in manhood. For this purpose, we have had occasion to take a wide survey of the diversified characters of the book of God. We have grouped together, for successive views, its notable women, its illustrious young men, its inspired bards, its eloquent orators, its ancient sages ; we have also gazed with rapture upon its scenes of moral beauty and its themes of more than earthly grandeur.

Well then may we prize the Bible as our book of books—the charter of our liberties, the oracle of our religion, the fountain head of all our high civilization. The Bible indeed belongs not exclusively to any one era or department of literature, but to all. Having pervaded and moulded all with which it has come in contact, it belongs alike to ancient and modern, to Classical and Theological literature. It is in the Bible that the long stream of the old Hebrew literature, flowing down like a mighty river from the heights of Paradise beyond the flood, sweeping across the vast plains of the oriental world, and bearing on its bosom the very ark of primeval civilization, meets another noble stream, both deep and broad, coming from the west—the stream of classical antiquity, flowing from the steeps of Parnassus, the cool groves of Arcadia, and the temple-crowned hills of Italia, bearing on its enchanted waters the immortal Argosy of

Grecian and Roman genius. It is in the Bible that these two great streams of oriental and classical literature meet and blend their currents. And it is from the Bible again, after mingling and purifying their waters, that they issue and go forth to spread life and beauty over the whole domain of Christendom. The three great languages, which contain all the choicest treasures of antiquity, are the Hebrew, Greek and Latin. These three tongues were reconciled at the cross. Two of them were mother tongues of the Bible. Brought into strange but harmonious union around the head of the dying Son of God, they were thus consecrated to their grand mission, as it were by a baptism of blood ; and from that day to this, they have been the classic repositories of all our Christian learning. In the Hebrew, Greek and Latin of the cross, which proclaimed "*Jesus the King of the Jews*" to all the world, a new era in the history of letters was inaugurated—an era from which the word of the Lord was to date its going forth from Jerusalem into all the languages of the earth, and in which it was to hold undisputed supremacy over the human mind. By these three great channels was an opening made for the world, into that deep mine of inexhaustible treasures, out of which have been dug all the richest jewels of truth and beauty that sparkle on the imperial brow of modern civilization. "The City of God," says Howson, "is built at the confluence of three civilizations."

But, shall we make sure of the main thing in this Divine Book ? Shall we enter the temple, and penetrate the veil into the holiest of all ? Allured by these, its lower, outward attractions, shall we press on to behold and to enjoy the light of its inner spiritual glory ? Shall we so search as to find the pearl of great price, so act as to secure the good part ? Shall we so live by this light, as to possess the prize of immortal life ?

Repenting of sin, obeying the Gospel, coming to God, as little children, shall we exercise faith in the Son of God, and rest our souls in calm unshaken confidence upon the blood of the Lamb? This, after all, is the grand subject-matter of the Bible—this, to each one of us, is the question of our immortality. Who has not felt the need of such a *Faith*? Who has not longed to make sure of such a boon? Who, under the deep searchings, and earnest cravings of our immortal, yet guilty nature, has not felt that the gospel of the Son of God alone must make him happy, or happy he shall never be? And who from his experience of life and his certain prospect of death, will not respond, as from his heart of hearts, to those yearning convictions of our common nature, which have been so beautifully expressed by that eminent philosopher, Sir Humphrey Davy—“ I envy no quality of mind or intellect in others, not genius, power, wit or fancy—but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to every other blessing : for it makes life a discipline of goodness—creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights ; awakens life in death, and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity ; makes an instrument of torture and of shame the ladder of ascent to Paradise ; and, far above all combination of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blessed, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the skeptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation and despair.”

Shall this “ firm religious faith,” so desirable, so blessed, so needful for us in life and in death, and to be breathed upon us only by the Spirit of God in the diligent study of his word—

shall this be our portion ? Whether it will or not, depends upon the use we make of that word. We are all voyagers upon life's great ocean. Our sails are set for the fair haven of immortality. But many treacherous seas must be passed : many hidden rocks and dangers lie along our vessel's course. We have but one chart and compass which can carry us safely through. It is the Bible. If we sail by it, our success will be certain, our recompense glorious. If we fail, the fault must be our own—the loss what tongue can tell !

“ They might have understood, the bard replied :
 They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
 Of such a book ! its author God himself ;
 Its subject God and man, salvation, life,
 And death ; eternal life, eternal death !
 Dread words ! that have no end, no bound.
 Most wondrous book ! bright candle of the **Lord** !
 Star of eternity ! the only star,
 By which the bark of man could navigate
 The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
 Securely—only star that rose on time,
 And on its dark and troubled billows, still,
 As generation, drifting swiftly by,
 Succeeded generation, threw a ray
 Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
 The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye.”

In looking back over what has been written in these pages, we cannot for a moment imagine that this unpretending volume will be at all suited to the taste of the times. Few perhaps of the great reading multitude will think it worth while to hear what we have to say upon a subject which they suppose themselves to have mastered long ago. When the Bible itself is

laid upon the shelf as an antiquated and useless record, fit only to be read at funerals or quoted occasionally in sermons, what chance has a mere book about the Bible, to gain the eye of this fiction-loving generation? The world has no lack of books and no lack of readers. But the men and women of Dreamland—the heroes and heroines, big and little, natural and unnatural, black and white, which modern genius can make to order and turn off with the regularity of a steam-mill—these are the popular divinities that rule the hour. Every bookstore is full of them. Every magazine, almost every newspaper greets its reader with a new tale of thrilling interest. Go into our steamboats and railroad cars, our circulating libraries and hotel reading-rooms, and you will find the people everywhere reading: reading as if they were a race of students; reading as if they would read their eyes out; reading as if life were not half long enough to do all the reading.

And reading what? Reading this mushroom, yellow literature, these endless shilly-shally novels and novelettes, whose productiveness, no longer dependent on the uncertain inspirations of genius, reveals an order of talent that works entirely by steam power. Such is the march of mind. And such are the books that are read by the million. These are the things that assume to educate the young, and mould the intelligence of the people; and do it by the double process of consuming the time which might be devoted to better reading, and of creating a taste which utterly unfits the mind for the acquisition of solid and useful knowledge.

For stuff like this, the grand old book of God, whose history is notched in all the centuries of the past, and linked to all the destinies of the future, whose immortal words have awakened the energies and expanded the intellects of millions of the

mighty dead now in glory, is forgotten or contemned by the aged and the young.

On trash like this, the great heart, and mind, and conscience of the reading world must now be fed. These dreams of imagination are offered as the daily food of a people's intellectual and moral life. These thousand and one creations of the brain, some moral, some immoral, some half and half of each, but all attractive in proportion to their extravagance or their skillful white-washing of some hideous form of lust or villainy—these are the books that find readers everywhere, and are now shaping the intellectual and moral character of the people.

And what is the result of all this reading? What is to be the end of this popular education by means of a fictitious literature, universally diffused through the steam press? Precisely that which the Prodigal Son arrived at, when having quitted the fat things of his father's house "he began to be in want, and would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat." Precisely the same, save only that our modern tale devourers are doing for their souls what the Prodigal only thought to do for his body, but was ashamed of himself and went back to his father's house.

By this we do not mean to pass sentence of condemnation upon all works of imagination, nor upon all the writers of fiction. Prose fiction as well as Poetry, holds an important place in literature, and may be made a most useful medium of instructive, entertaining knowledge. But our censure at present lies against the inordinate excess of the thing. Even a good thing does harm when it is pursued to the neglect or injury of other things equally good or better. When it threatens to engulf every other interest it becomes a positive evil. And this is now the tendency of novel-writing as it regards the true interest of

our literature and of our reading public. From the excessive laudation of the press, bestowing, upon every thing that can wield a pen, an immortality that Walter Scott himself might have coveted, one would suppose that the novel had well nigh monopolized the whole market of modern genius—demanding, as it seems, an amount of brains which the old Greeks and Romans, in their utmost flights of fancy, never conceived of as a possible thing. “I have often maintained,” says John Foster, “that fiction may be much more instructive than real history. I think so still ; but viewing the rout of novels as they are, I think they do incalculable mischief. I wish we could collect all together, and make one vast fire of them. I should exult to see the smoke of them ascend like that of Sodom and Gomorrah ; the judgment would be as just.”

But there is yet a reading public of a different order. There are some that still stand by the old landmarks. There is a large and respectable class who prefer fact to fiction, and who will not forsake “the waters of Shiloah that go softly,” for the wild and turbid streams of Dreamland. To them we turn. And if any thing we have written should be the means of increasing their admiration for the book of God, or of increasing their numbers, by leading the young to become Bible readers, this volume will have accomplished its end.

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