



CHARLES C. SMITH, JUNIOR, 1847. M. A. 1847. 1847.

C. C. Smith

Member of the New York State Bar Association

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Miscellaneous Articles.

THE PASTOR'S NEW YEAR'S WISH FOR HIS PEOPLE.

"The Lord be with you all."—2 THESS. 3 : 16.

AMID the congratulations and good wishes, which long-established custom has sanctioned at this season of the year, the Sacred Scriptures supply us with many which, though at all times appropriate, are especially so at the commencement of so important a part of our life as our entrance on another year. These wishes refer principally to spiritual blessings; and the heart evidently cannot err, except in coming short of the reality. As the spirit of Christianity is emphatically one of benevolence, or good will and love to all men, so it is obvious that this is an exercise in which every genuine believer should be frequently engaged. To the affectionate spirit of the Apostle Paul, his life and epistles bear the fullest testimony; and in the latter, we often find him pouring out the full tide of his affectionate soul in the largest and best desires for those to whom he wrote, as in the language of the text, which we adopt as expressive of the fervent desire of our own heart for you all, at the commencement of this year. In directing your attention to the subject, we shall briefly consider, I. In what character or relation the presence of the Lord is desired. II. For what purposes this presence of the Lord is desired for you all.

I. In what character or relation the presence of the Lord is desired.

As God in his absolute character of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, who presides and reigns over all his works, is at all times, and in all places near us, and never can be more so at one time than another, it must appear obvious to every one that it is not in this sense that the presence of the Lord is here referred to. When we consider our natural character too, as that of rebels against

his government, and therefore under the condemning sentence of his holy and righteous laws, if we had no other presence than this to look for, it could afford us no comfort, but rather be an aggravation of our dread and misery. The presence of the Lord, however, that is here sought, or desired, is the very same as that which is referred to, when he said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." It is that, too, which is referred to in the endearing promises, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world;" and, "I will never leave thee, no never forsake thee." Now we know that his presence has respect to God entirely in his gracious character as the God of grace, reconciling the world to himself by Christ Jesus, not imputing their trespasses unto them, but pardoning their iniquity, and bestowing upon them every blessing which they need for their spiritual welfare, both in the present world, and in that which is to come. In other words, it is the presence of God as the God of salvation, and the God of the exceeding great and precious promises with which the Bible is so richly stored, and whose kingdom ruleth over all things, that is desired by the Apostle in the language of the text. And when, in imitation of him, we earnestly desire that the Lord may be with you all throughout the year on which we have entered, it is as the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace, presiding over all things, and directing all things to his own glory and the good of his people, that we earnestly desire he may be with you.

II. Let us now consider for what purposes this presence of the Lord is desired for you all. When the Apostle expressed the wish of the text, it was as much as to say, May the Lord be with you,

1. *To supply all your temporal wants.* So long as we are in this world, we are the creatures of many wants, which are daily returning upon us, and not unfrequently increase as we advance in the pilgrimage of life. Such too is the entireness of our dependence on God, that all our supplies must come from him, who alone performeth all things for us. Hence, said the Psalmist, "The eyes of all things wait upon the Lord, and he gives them their meat in due season; he opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and whatsoever he is pleased to give, that we receive, and nothing more. Now, since such is the nature and extent of our dependence upon him, it is evident that, without his blessing resting on all our efforts, they will be in vain; yea, we may "rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness," but, if the Lord is not with us, to bless us in our undertakings, we shall not prosper; for it is in him we live, and move, and have our being. It is he who makes the sun to rise and shine, and the rain and the dews to descend, and giveth us fruitful seasons, and crowneth the year with his goodness. Now, the wish expressed by the Apostle for the ancient believing Thessalonians was, that the Lord might ever be with them to grant them the answer to their daily prayer; "Give us this day

our daily bread." And when we adopt the wish as our own, and pour it out as the earnest desire of our heart in reference to you, we mean by it that we pray the Lord to be with you, so as to supply all your wants with whatever temporal good things you may require during the year, and his wisdom may see fit to bestow upon you.

2. *To guide you in all your undertakings.* It is proverbially true that we are ever apt to err, and in ways without number to be led astray; for we cannot see afar off. And owing to our ignorance of what is to be the ultimate result of things, we may often so far mistake matters as to choose that which is the least worthy, and fraught with the greatest danger to our best interests. Particularly is this likely to be the case in the days of youth, when the mind is apt to be rash in its choice, headstrong in its course, with but little experience to guide it, and frequently exposed to many ensnaring allurements,—all calculated to lead it astray from the right path. So much darkness, too, may hang over our prospects, that the mind, as it ventures to look forward into futurity, may sometimes be in a state of the greatest doubt as to what is the right path to choose. Now, in such circumstances as these, how valuable is the counsel of a friend who knows our state, and can guide us so that we shall not err, but prosper in all our ways. The great question, however, is, Where can we get such a guide? For, many cases will occur in which the wisdom and discernment, even of the wisest and best of men, will be altogether unavailing. But, there is One who is perfectly acquainted at all times with our state and circumstances,—knows the end from the beginning,—is ever near us, and has also said to all his people that He will guide them with his counsel while here, and afterward receive them to glory; and this is none other than the Lord. And when we pray that he may be with you, it is that he may be thus with you in all your way.

3. *To defend you in all your outward dangers.* Dangers surround us on all hands; for the world is so full of the elements of evil, in consequence of sin, that we often know not well when we are safe. The pestilence that wasteth at noon-day may surround us; the fire that consumes everything before it, or the storm that lays waste everything in its course, may assail our habitation, and lay everything in ruin around us. In ways, too, without number, our life, for aught that we know, may be in jeopardy during the year on which we have entered. Every day then that we may live, we shall stand in eminent need of protection, and that, too, by night as well as by day, at home as well as when abroad. But where is the being who can thus continually be with us, and can thus supply us with all the protection that we may require? Who, indeed, can do this, but He who has said, that "He will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for, upon all the glory shall be a defence; and that he is a

hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Who has also said unto all his people, that he will be a sun and a shield to them, and that they have only to call upon him in the time of trouble, and he will hide them in his pavilion, or in the secret place of his tabernacle; yea, that he will overshadow them with his wings, so that no evil shall befall them." Now, when we pray that the Lord may be with you all, it is that he may thus defend or succour you amid all the dangers which may surround your path.

4. *To keep you from sin.* It does not admit of a doubt that sin is the bitter root or source of all our ills. For, if there were no sin in the world, there could and there would be no danger or suffering in the world. But though this is so evidently the case that all men may know it, yet we are constantly in danger of falling into it. This arises partly from the natural corruption of the heart, and from the innumerable circumstances which may prove the occasion of our departing from the laws of God. The unseen agency of Satan also, we must calculate on meeting; for, he is continually going about seeking whom he may devour; and so great is his malice against piety, and so great is his power and subtlety, that, if it were possible to be done, he would deceive even the elect of God, and lead them fatally to their ruin. As sin, too, never fails to disturb the peace of the soul, and to bring down the displeasure and judgments of God on all who commit it, O how desirable is it, that we should be kept from committing it. Now, such is the state of the soul itself, and so many are the temptations to the commission of it with which we are surrounded, that nothing but Divine protection and grace, constantly communicated to us, can keep us safe amid them; and when we wish that the Lord may be with you, it is that he may succour you, when you are tempted, and keep you unspotted from the world.

5. *To sustain you under all your trials.* As man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards, so we cannot calculate on being long exempt from trials of some kind or other. In these days of great commercial enterprise and difficulty, there are few who have not, in some way or other, to contend with embarrassing occurrences. The aspect of affairs, too, in our beloved country, and throughout the world, is strongly indicative that these days of trial and perplexity are not yet at an end. During the year, therefore, on which we have entered, we may meet with many perplexing occurrences. Adversity in various forms, or losses and crosses in our worldly undertakings, may all assail us, and render our life a trial of faith, patience, resignation, fortitude, and hope. Indeed, it may be that every grace of the Christian character will have to be brought into constant and the greatest exercise. But, in such a state of things as this, the heart, like that of the Israelites of old, may become faint by reason of the way; and so weak are we in ourselves, that nothing short of the sustaining aid of a Divine

arm can uphold us. Now, whatever may be the trials either as to number or nature which may be before us, the wish of the text covers them all. For, if we have the Lord with us, come to us what will, all will assuredly be well with us.

6. *To comfort you in all your sorrows.* Many are the causes and occasions of grief which we meet with in the pilgrimage of life. The nearest and dearest of the relationships of this world may be broken up; or he with whom we have taken sweet counsel together, may be removed from us; or he who was valuable to us as a counsellor, may be cut down by the unsparing hand of death; or we may be bereaved of those who are dear to us as our own soul; and thus sorrow may fill our hearts, and weeping and lamentation may be heard in all our dwellings. But even in such a case as this, the Gospel, with all its blessings, furnishes us with a complete and never-failing antidote against all the sorrows with which we may be afflicted. For, it directs us to God, as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations: tells us to be of good cheer, and to be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to make known our requests unto him, and assures us, if we do this, that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." For, notwithstanding the sorrows with which we may be afflicted, he still rests in his love, careth for us, maketh everything work together for our good, and will in due season wipe away all tears from our eyes. Now, when we wish the Lord to be with you, it is that he may comfort you under whatever grief may come over you.

7. *To make you fruitful in every good word and work.* When we view life as a state of constant progress to eternity, and our character here as forming us for our destiny there, we cannot, and we should not, be unconcerned as to our growing meetness for the holy and exalted blessedness and exercises of heaven. As we advance, too, in life, we become greater debtors to Divine goodness and mercy and love, and are, therefore, under constantly increasing obligations to do more than ever we have done for the glory and honour of God. As we are also enjoying for a longer season the various means of grace, we ought to strive to be increasingly fruitful under them, in order that we may manifest our profiting in the knowledge of the Son of God, and thus testify by our constant improvement under them, that we have not received the grace of God in vain. As one year, too, closes upon us, and another begins, it reminds us that there is so much less left for our improvement and usefulness, before we shall be called to give an account of our stewardship. How desirous, therefore, should we be, that the year on which we have now entered, should be a year of great spiritual improvement and usefulness, by which we shall be made to abound in the fruits of righteousness to the praise of the riches of Divine grace. And as nothing but the presence of the Lord with you can enable you

to be so, on this account, also, we fervently pray that he may be with you all.

8. *To bless unto you all the means of grace.* The means of grace, consisting as they do of the Sacred Scriptures and the various ordinances of Divine appointment, are by far the most important gifts and privileges which we can ever possess in this present world; because, as divinely appointed means they are inseparably connected with the saving of our souls, and our progress in spiritual and holy attainments. But, important, and well calculated in themselves though they be for the attainment of these ends, yet past experience and daily observation, as well as the express declarations of the word of God, all tell us that, if the Lord is not with us in the use of them, they will all be of no saving influence. Though "Paul may plant, and Apollos water, yet it is God who giveth the increase." There may be much reading of the Scriptures, and much waiting on him in the ordinances of his appointment, but if he himself is not with us, it will be all in vain. The word will be read and heard without its power being felt; without the soul being converted; or, if it has been already converted, without its being "changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is thus we fear, my dear hearers, that the means of grace are productive of so little apparent benefit among us. The Lord is not with us in them. Hence, careless and impenitent sinners come to the house of God, and leave it careless and impenitent still. The veil of ignorance and delusion, which naturally hangs over their heart, continues untaken away, so that they can not discern their true character, nor feel the misery of their situation, nor see that "a deceived heart has led them aside; that they are feeding on ashes," and that they are in the broad way which is leading them to destruction. And oh! how deeply affecting is it to witness our fellow-men, many of whom may be endeared to us by the ties of kindred, of neighbourhood, and of friendship, thus continuing from the beginning of the year to the end of it, "without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world," and preparing themselves as vessels fitted for destruction; and all this, notwithstanding the "line upon line, and precept on precept," which they are receiving. How heart-rending to think of souls perishing, and going down to perdition even among us! And how can this soul-destruction be stopped, and the word of God as here preached prove the power of God, and the wisdom of God to the saving of souls, but by the Lord being with us? And, if we are to have a different state of things among us during the year on which we have entered, the fervent prayer, not only of the preacher, but also of all who hear him, should be, "Come from the four winds, O breath of the Lord, and breathe upon the slain, that they may live!" And if, in answer to our united prayer, the presence of the Lord is thus felt to be among us, then shall we soon see sinners everywhere being awakened, and anxiously inquiring what they must do to be

saved. The graces also of his own people will be revived and invigorated, and the Church will become as a field which the Lord has blessed. In order that this may be the happy result of the use of the means of grace during the year on which we have entered, our fervent prayer is "The Lord be with you all!"

9. *To carry you on in the way which leads to heaven.* Life is passing away with us all, and we are approaching death and eternity. O how desirable is it that we should be as constantly preparing for heaven, as the flight of time is preparing us for death and the grave! The voice of God in his word, as well as the counsels and warnings of many who die without hope, assures us that life is the only time which is given to man to prepare for heaven, so that if it is wasted in sin, and without obtaining an interest in Christ, we cannot enter into it; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But how melancholy is the prospect of a life that has been thus spent! How affecting its end when we can have no hope of heaven in death! And how distressing must it be to witness the progress of life with no other termination in view but this! But on the other hand, how delightful must it be to be able to say, as we close one year and enter upon another, "Now is our salvation nearer than ever it was, and if it shall please God that our life shall terminate this year, death shall find us with our lamps burning, and as persons who are waiting for the coming of their Lord." Now, in order to this, we must be under a heavenly influence, and possessed of a heavenly spirit, or we never can rise to the contemplation of heavenly things, or to meetness for them. And as this influence can not be received but as the Lord is with you, when we pray that his presence may be with you, it is that he may so lead, and strengthen, and sanctify you, that your path may be a constant progress to "the spirits of the just made perfect, and to the general assembly of the Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

The arrows of death are ever falling around us, and removing one and another to the eternal world. It is not likely that we shall all be alive to meet again on the first Sabbath of another year. But, whether it shall be the preacher or the hearers, a parent or a child, a husband or a wife, the young or the old, who shall be called away, we cannot tell; God only knows. But surely it becomes us all to lay it to heart, lest coming suddenly upon us, death should find us unprepared; and, as we cannot close these eyes in death, so as to awaken beyond it in the glory and blessedness of heaven, unless the Lord is with us then, our fervent prayer for you all is, that he may ever be with you to bless you in life, to sustain and comfort you in death, and to receive and bear away your departing spirit to his mansions in heaven.

Fellow-believers and partakers of the hopes and joys of the Gospel! may the Lord be with you to bless you with all needed grace, and to enable you to go on your heavenly way rejoicing.

Impenitent sinners! may the Lord be with you, to awaken and convert your souls, and to enable you to take up your cross and follow him.

Hesitating and doubting hearers of the Gospel! may the Lord be with you, to enable you this day to choose the Lord to be your God, and to cast in your lot among his people.

Youthful hearer of the Gospel! may the Lord be with you, to lead you to choose the good part which shall never be taken from you, and to say unto God, "Thou art my Father, my guide from my youth."

Fellow-travellers to the grave and eternity! may the Lord be with us all, to prepare us for our departure should it occur during this year, and in mercy and love to grant us a safe and peaceful death, and an abundant and joyful entrance into his glory in heaven.

PASTOR.

THREE LETTERS TO A CONSERVATIVE.

LETTER I.

DR. ARMSTRONG'S LETTER TO DR. VAN RENSSELAER.

ON THE PROPER STATEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF SLAVERY.

TO THE REV. C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D. : The September number of the "Presbyterian Magazine" contains a short review of several recently published works on Slavery, among others, of the "Christian Doctrine of Slavery." In the course of this review you express certain opinions, which, if I mistake not, constitute the peculiar creed of those who take the title of *Conservatives*, as contradistinguished from the *Abolitionist*, on the one hand, and what they designate as the *Proslavery man*,* on the other. On these opinions I take the liberty of addressing you thus, through the press.

Do not understand me as intending to find fault with your treatment of my book. The spirit in which you have reviewed it is all that I could desire, and the praise you have awarded it, more than it deserves. But,

1. The opinions you have expressed are not peculiar opinions of your own, but common to you with a large class of Christian men, especially in the Northern States. They are, therefore, matters

* I use these terms not intending thereby to admit the propriety of their popular application, but, simply, because they are thus applied. Were I to designate the three parties, with an eye to the true nature and origin of their creeds, I should call them the *Philosophical*—using the word philosophy in the sense of what Paul designates as "science, falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6: 20), the *Philosophico-Scriptural*, and the *Scriptural*. Whether such a designation would be a proper one, I submit to your judgment after you have read my letters.

of public interest, and may properly be made the subject of public discussion.

2. Without any intention of controversy, either on your part or mine, the issues have fairly arisen between us in our published writings, for I have seldom seen the peculiar articles of Conservatism more distinctly and concisely presented than in your review. You give me credit for maintaining a "kind spirit," and for "fairness," in writing on the subject of slavery. There is no need that I should "speak *your* praise" in the Presbyterian Church. As you truly say, "this delicate subject is growing in importance," and the discussion of it, in a Christian spirit, will do good, I believe, and not evil.

3. The points on which we differ lie entirely outside of the proper range of ecclesiastical action. Their discussion, therefore, cannot involve any "agitation" of the Church, though their decision in such a way that we all shall "see eye to eye"—if such a thing be possible—would greatly promote Christian sympathy among God's people, and advance the prosperity of Zion.

I heartily sympathize with you in the wish with which you close your article, that our Church shall not change "the scriptural position," which she has assumed on the subject of slavery. When she declared, in answer to certain memorials asking her to make slaveholding a subject of discipline, "Since Christ and his inspired Apostles did not make slaveholding a bar to communion, *we, as a court of Christ, have no authority to do so; since they did not attempt to remove it from the Church by legislation, we have no authority to legislate on the subject*" (see Digest, p. 813), she made a deliverance on slavery which covers all proper ground of ecclesiastical action, and a deliverance perfectly satisfactory, in so far as I know, to our whole Church at the South. This "scriptural position" has secured for her peace in the midst of abounding contention; and I can wish, "for Zion's sake," she may ever maintain that position.

Outside of the proper range of ecclesiastical action, however, there are points on which good men may honestly differ. Such are the points to which I propose directing your attention in the present letters.

1. We differ respecting the proper statement of the doctrine of scripture respecting slavery.

Your statement of that doctrine is,—"*Slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful.*"—(*Pres. Mag.* p. 422.)

My statement of it is,—"*Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God, and is not to be accounted an 'offence' by his Church.*"—(*Chn. Doe. Slav.* p. 8.)

Taking your statement, in connection with your expressed wish that our Church should not change the position she has assumed on the subject of slavery, a fair interpretation of it must make it cover, in so far as ecclesiastical action is concerned, all that mine

does. Yet, no one can read the two, when thus placed side by side, without feeling that they differ, at least in tone and spirit. And I now raise the question: *Which statement of the doctrine best accords with the teaching and spirit of the Word of God?*

That we may answer this question intelligently let us look at it,—

First, As a statement, in general terms, of a conclusion from admitted, scriptural, premises.

The statement of these premises in the “*Christian Doctrine of Slavery*,” pp. 102, 103, a statement to which you do not object, is in these terms: “In our examination of what the New Testament teaches on the subject of slavery, we have found, 1, That slaveholding does not appear in any catalogue of sins or ‘offences’ given us by inspired men; 2, That the Apostles received slaveholders into the Christian Church, and continued them therein, without giving any intimation, either at the time of their reception or afterwards, that slaveholding was a sin or an ‘offence;’ 3, That Paul sent back a fugitive slave to his own master again, and assigned as his reason for so doing, that master’s right to the services of his slave; 4, That the Apostles frequently enjoin the relative duties of master and slave, and enforce their injunctions upon both alike, as Christian men, by Christian motives, uniformly teaching certain evils which they sought to correct, as incidental evils, and not ‘part and parcel’ of slavery itself; 5, That Paul treated the distinctions which slavery creates as matters of very little importance, in so far as the interests of the Christian life are concerned; 6, That he declares that this his doctrine respecting the relation of slave and master, is wholesome doctrine, and according to godliness, and the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ; 7, And directs Christian ministers to teach it in the Church, and prohibits the teaching of any doctrine at variance with it, under the most solemn sanctions known to the Church.”

Such are the premises,—fairly stated. What is a proper statement, in general terms, of the logical conclusion therefrom? Is it simply, “Slavery is not *necessarily and in all circumstances* sinful?” Or, is it, “Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God, and is not to be accounted an ‘offence’ by his Church?”

Second, Let us look for a decision in a different direction: and ask which statement best accords with the tone and spirit in which the scriptural deliverances on this subject are made?

And here, without examining each of the several passages which might be quoted, let us turn, at once, to that which of all others may most properly be appealed to, to decide the question, viz.: 1 Tim. 6: 1–5. Here inspired Paul is giving instruction to Timothy, a minister of the Gospel, respecting what he should *teach*, and “how he ought to behave himself” in the Church of God. For this reason we are bound to consider this as the instruction of the One Head of the Church to the ministers of that Church respecting

their duty as teachers and rulers in the Church, *i. e.* it is express instruction to us on the very point we are examining.

“Let as many servants (*douloi*), as are under the yoke, count their own masters (*despotas*) worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters (*despotas*) let them not despise them because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things *teach and exhort*. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness,—*from such withdraw thyself.*”

Is there no discord to your ear between Paul’s “certain sound,” “wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness,” and such quavering notes as “not necessarily” and in all “circumstances?” Or,—Take the whole passage, read it over carefully, examine each of its several clauses, try not simply to get at the truth it contains, but try to catch the spirit of the passage; and then, make a deliverance on slavery, in general terms, and see, if it will assume the form—“Slavery is not *necessarily and in all circumstances* a sin;” or, “Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God, and is not to be accounted an ‘offence’ by his Church.”

You may say, the two statements mean substantially the same thing. Even granting that such is the intention of those who use them, I object to your statement, because,—1. It is an unusual form of stating ethical propositions such as this, and though it is broad enough to acquit the slaveholding member of the Church, it gives to his acquittal a sort of “whip, and clear him” air—pardon my use of this homely expression: I can find no other which will so well convey the exact idea I wish to give utterance to—which seems to me, in contrast with all the New Testament deliverances on the subject.

2. When taken apart from all explanations—and every general proposition should be so expressed as to bear such examination—it does not fairly cover all the ground which the doctrine of Christ and his inspired Apostles covers.

I know—I think—your objections to such a statement of the doctrine as I am contending for; and, if I am right as to what those objections are, a little impartial, ingenuous examination will satisfy you that they are all groundless. You, probably, would ask,—

1. Does not the statement “slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God, and is not to be accounted an ‘offence’ by his Church,” involve the idea that all slaveholding is sinless in the sight of God?

I answer, by no means. When we affirm that marriage is not a sin in the sight of God, we do not mean, nor are we understood to affirm that all marriages are lawful—marriages contracted within the “prohibited degrees,” for example. As the proposition is one based upon the law of God, the marriage to which alone it properly applies, must subsist in accordance with the requirements of that law. There is a slaveholding which the Word of God teaches us is “consistent with the Christian character and profession (that is, consistent with justice, mercy, holiness, love to God and love to man).” —*Hodge*. The nature of this slaveholding, the law of God defines. When, then, we state the proposition that “slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God,” it can properly apply to such slaveholding only as subsists in conformity with the law of God.

2. Does not such a statement involve the idea of the perpetuity of slavery? I answer, by no means. When we affirm that despotic government in France, at the present day—demanded, as I believe, and I doubt not you do too, by the general good of the French nation—is not sinful in the sight of God; or, when we give utterance to a more general proposition, yet covering this particular case, and say, civil government is ordained of God; we do not mean to affirm, nor does any man understand us as affirming, the perpetuity of despotic government in that country. The time may come when the general good will demand a different form of government for France, and there is nothing in the general truth expressed in the proposition, “civil government is ordained of God,” to forbid the French nation, when that time does come, taking measures to secure a different form of government for themselves, in any lawful way.

3. It is conceded, on all hands, that there are incidental evils attaching to slavery as it exists in this country, and in our day. Will not such a statement of the doctrine be so misunderstood by many, as to render them indifferent to the removal of those evils? Here, again, I answer by no means. And I answer thus confidently, because I feel that I have firm ground upon which to stand.

The Word of God is *the* standard in Christian ethics. Its deliverances are the result of a better than human wisdom,—better, not only as a superior wisdom, but as a wisdom guided and governed by perfect benevolence. If, then, the Word of God makes its deliverances in a certain way, I *know* that that is the best way—the way in which the truth will soonest and most certainly work out its appropriate result. Paul has written some things on the subject of slavery, which, judging from what we see throughout our land, “are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable will wrest as they do also the other scriptures.” (2 Pet. 3: 16.) But of this we may rest assured. We will never mend the matter in this particular, by attempting to improve upon the deliverances of the Word of God.

GEO. D. ARMSTRONG.

THREE CONSERVATIVE REPLIES.

LETTER I.

DR. VAN RENSSELAER'S REPLY TO DR. ARMSTRONG.

ON THE PROPER STATEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF
SLAVERY.

TO THE REV. GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG, D.D. :

Your three Letters on Slavery have been read by me with great interest. They cover ground, not often distinctly included in the field of discussion, and they exhibit diversities of sentiment which rightly claim a candid consideration.

The appellation of a "Conservative," which you have been pleased to apply to me, gives me satisfaction. I have always professed to be "conservative" on this exciting subject; repudiating, on the one hand, the fundamental principle of fanatical abolitionism, which makes slaveholding always and everywhere sinful, and, on the other hand, rejecting with equal conscientiousness the ultra defences of slavery, which constitute it a Divine ordinance, in the sense that civil government is "ordained of God," and which claim for it an undefined permanence.*

I follow your example in making a few preliminary remarks.

1. Some of our mutual friends, who are fearful of the agitation of slavery in our Church, have advised me not to reply to your letters. But if any danger was to be apprehended, the alarm ought to have been sounded before so much had been written from the other side of the line. It is quite probable that a brief notice of my brief review would have been allowed to pass without any answer. My position, however, is very much changed, after three long letters, containing an elaborate and skilful attack on the conservative views prevalent in the Presbyterian Church, have been extensively circulated. I am glad that you concur with me in the opinion that a discussion of the points at issue between us "cannot involve any agitation of the Church."

2. The whole truth pertaining to this subject, is of the utmost consequence. Slavery is among the prominent practical questions of the age. The destiny of several millions of human beings is more or less affected by the views of ministers and others, who, like yourself, possess an extensive influence in the formation of public opinion. I cannot shrink from any lawful responsibility in candidly and boldly maintaining what I conceive to be the true philosophy and morals of slavery, as set forth in the Scriptures,

* I am a little surprised that, in the popular classification of "Abolitionist, Conservative, and Proslavery man," you so quietly assume the appellation of the latter. Whether I admit the propriety of your proposed designation of "Philosophical, Philosophico-Scriptural, and Scriptural," you will better understand after you have read my letters. The only true division is Scriptural and Unscriptural.

and in the testimonies of the Presbyterian Church. No servant of Christ should exhibit a false timidity, when providentially challenged to defend the right.

3. Your candour and courtesy are models for my imitation. We undoubtedly entertain sentiments in regard to slavery, coincident in the main, but varying in importance according to the standpoint of different readers. Neither of us is a prejudiced partisan. Like yourself, although born at the North, I have lived at the South, and have learned, both there and here, to sympathize with my brethren who are involved in the evils of this perplexing social system. In Virginia I completed my theological education, was licensed and ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery" of West Hanover, and commenced my ministry as a missionary to the slaves, on the plantations of the Roanoke and Dan Rivers. These personalities are mentioned to show that we are, in some respects at least, on a level in this discussion. It is better for ministers of the same Church, who mutually appreciate each other's objects and position, and who endeavour candidly to arrive at the truth, to hold a Christian correspondence on slavery, than for boisterous and uncharitable partisans to break lances for victory in a crowd of excited spectators. The present opportunity is a good one for mutual explanations, which may possibly produce a nearer approximation to agreement than is indicated by the line of separation, marked out by some of your arguments.

4. The discussion embraces the whole subject of slavery, and not merely the points which might by some be placed within the limits of Church authority. According to your judgment, "the points on which we differ, lie *entirely outside* of the proper range of ecclesiastical action." I shall hereafter express my views in regard to this particular opinion, contenting myself, for the present, with the simple affirmation, that I write with all the light I can obtain from the Bible, and with whatever illumination the Spirit of God may graciously grant. Without discussing at present, the precise range of ecclesiastical action, I shall endeavour to seek "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

5. The general form of a discussion depends upon the positions of those who engage in it. When I discussed the subject of slavery in 1835, my object was to examine and expose the two fundamental principles of ultra abolitionism, viz., that slaveholding is always and everywhere sinful, and that emancipation is an immediate and universal duty. On the present occasion I am called upon to defend the scriptural doctrine against arguments, which seem to advocate (in a comparatively mild form) ultra pro-slavery views. The Bible, as well as the Presbyterian testimony founded upon it, points to a clear, deep channel between these two dangerous passes. The Assembly's testimonies of 1818 and 1845, I regard as scriptural, harmonious, and, for the present at least, sufficient, occupying as

they do, the true position between two extremes, and vindicating the opinions of those whom you rightly call "conservatives."

I now proceed to the subject of your first Letter, viz., THE PROPER STATEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF SLAVERY.

Your statement is, "*Slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God, and is not to be accounted an offence by his Church.*"

My statement is, "*Slaveholding* is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful.*"

My statement was written *currente calamo*, without any intention to propound an exact formula of the scriptural doctrine. Some might prefer to either statement one in these words: "Slaveholding, in itself considered, is not sinful," or "All slaveholding is not sinful;" or "There is a slaveholding, which is consistent with the Christian profession." I adhere, however, to what I have written; because, whilst my original form of statement includes the lawfulness of the relation, in itself considered, it also more clearly expresses the idea that circumstances may render the continuance of the relation wrong. It brings out, in my judgment, *more* scriptural truth on the subject than any of the forms mentioned, and especially than yours.

All admit that slavery, in a worse form than that which now exists in this country, prevailed throughout the Roman empire. As a *system* in actual operation, with its cruel laws and usages, the Apostles could have no more approved it than they did the despotism of Nero. And yet they nowhere condemned the relation itself as necessarily sinful. Despotism maintains a relation to civil government analogous to that which slaveholding sustains to the household. Absolute authority may exist in both relations, under certain circumstances, without sin. The inspired writers uniformly treat both despotism and slaveholding as forms of society which circumstances might justify.

The Bible contains no formal statement of the doctrine of slavery, but enforces the duties growing out of the relation. A correct statement of the scriptural mode of treating slavery might be in these words: "All masters and all slaves are bound to perform their relative duties, arising from legal authority on the one hand, and from enjoined submission on the other." You had, undoubtedly, the right to exhibit the doctrine of slaveholding in the more abstract form, propounded in your volume. But, I think that the reader of your volume and letters does not receive the full impression of scripture truth and exhortation, properly pertaining to this subject. Your unqualified statement that "slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God," seems to me to fall short of a perfect formula, even from "the admitted, scriptural premises" adduced, and by me cordially acquiesced in. I submit a brief commentary on these "admitted, scriptural premises," by way of developing the

* I have substituted "slaveholding" for "slavery," in order to remove all ambiguity in the terms.

argument. 1. If "slaveholding does not appear in any catalogue of sins," this fact proves that it is not *malum in se*. It is also deserving of notice that slaveholding does not appear in any enumeration of virtues and graces. 2. The Apostles received slaveholders to the communion, and so they did despots, and their abettors in Cæsar's household. 3. Paul sent back a fugitive slave, and would also have sent back a deserter from the imperial army. 4. The injunction to slaves to obey their masters does not approve of slavery, any more than the command to submit to "the powers that be," implied approbation of Nero's despotism. 5. The distinctions of slavery in regard to the interests of Christian life are, like all other outward distinctions, of comparatively little importance; and yet the general injunction of Paul on this subject was, "Art thou called, being a slave? care not for it. But if thou mayst be free, *use it rather*." 6. The Christian doctrine of Paul respecting the mutual duties of masters and servants is clearly wholesome, and utterly subversive of modern abolitionism; but whilst it proves that the relation is not in itself sinful, it does not sanction the relation as a desirable and permanent one. 7. Christian ministers, who preach to the slaves insurrection, instead of submission, and who denounce slaveholding as necessarily and always sinful, are on unscriptural and dangerous ground.

In my judgment, your "admitted scriptural premises" do not warrant the unqualified statement of doctrine which you have laid down. My commentary is simply designed as a rebutter to your too broad conclusions.

Slaveholding, in itself considered, is not sinful; that is to say, it is not a *malum in se*; or, in other words, it is a relation that may be justified by circumstances. When we say that the relation itself is not sinful, we do not mean, by the expression, a mere abstraction: for slavery cannot be conceived of apart from a master and a slave. But we mean that slaveholding, as a practical relation, depends upon certain conditions for its justification. What is *malum in se* cannot be justified by any circumstances; the law of God always condemns it. But slaveholding being among things "*indifferent*" in morals, it may be right or wrong, according to the conditions of its existence. Hence your definition, which excludes circumstances, comes short of the full Scripture doctrine.

Three sources of your defective statement, as it appears to me, deserve consideration.

1st. You have erred in placing the relation of master and slave on the same basis with that of parent and child. Your illustration assumes too much on this point. There are specific and fundamental differences between these two relations. The marriage relation is divinely constituted; it existed anterior to sin; it is normal in its character and permanent in duration; and it is honourable in all. Whereas the relation of master and slave cannot be said to be more than providentially permitted or sanctioned; it

originated, as you admit, by the wickedness of "manstealing," and by a violation of the laws of God; it implies an abnormal condition of things, and is therefore temporary; and it must be acknowledged, that it is in discredit generally throughout Christendom. The two relations are quite distinct in their nature. That of master and slave is not, indeed, in itself sinful; but it cannot be looked upon with the complacency with which the parental relation is contemplated. The parental relation and slaveholding possess, of course, some affinities. They may fall into the same category, if the classification be made wide enough, for both belong to the social state and have relative duties. Or, if the classification be made even narrower, they may still be arranged under the same category, for both imply the possession of absolute power. But, if the classification be into natural relations, and those relations which arise from circumstances, then marriage goes into the former category, and slavery into the latter. It is only within a certain compass, therefore, that we can reason from one to the other, without danger of pernicious fallacies.

2. In the second place, your unqualified proposition that "slaveholding is not sinful" mistakes the scriptural view by implying its lawfulness *everywhere and under all circumstances*. The relation of master and slave may be lawful in Virginia at the present time. But is it lawful in New Jersey, or in New England? And will it *always* be lawful in Virginia? I apprehend not. The good of the slave and of the community is the great law controlling the existence of the relation. If a slaveholder were to remove from Virginia into New Jersey, your proposition loses all its virtue, and collapses into error. Slaveholding is sinful by the laws of that State; and even if there were no law, prohibiting its existence on the statute-book, could the citizens of New Jersey become slaveholders under the plea that "slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God?" Again, is it clear, that citizens in the Free States can always lawfully enter into this relation, when they remove into States where the laws sanction it? Under the shelter of your proposition, they might do so; but it is certain, that there are tens of thousands of Christians in the Free States, who could not enter voluntarily into this relation without involving their consciences in sin. Slavery, even in the Slave States, where it may lawfully exist at the present time, is abnormal and exceptional, and is to be justified only by circumstances. This your definition overlooks.

3. In the third place, your statement passes by the testimony of the Old Testament dispensation. Moses found Slavery an institution in existence, and treated it as an admitted evil. Tolerating it under the peculiar condition of society, the laws of the Hebrew Commonwealth were framed with a view to mitigate its evils, to restrict its limits, and, finally, to discountenance it altogether. The distinction between the lawfulness of enslaving Israelites and Gentiles, with various other discriminating regulations, shows, that

Moses took into view circumstances in his legislation on this subject. Even under the Jewish dispensation, your statements would not have been received as a full and definite exposition of the true doctrine of slavery. My original statement that "slaveholding is not necessarily and under all circumstances sinful" accords better, both with the letter of the Old Testament dispensation and the spirit of the New, than does yours.

What I especially insist upon, in a scriptural statement of the doctrine of slavery is, that the relation itself shall not be confounded with the injustice of slave laws on the one hand, nor separated, on the other hand, from the providential circumstances or condition of society, where it claims a lawful existence.

If you, therefore, ask, generally, why in my statement, I qualify the relation by the words "not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful," I reply, that the possession of despotic power is a thing to be justified, and for which a good reason is always to be given. Marriage is to continue as long as the race, and is in its own nature everywhere lawful. Not so with slavery. You, yourself, contend in your book, that it was originally wrong, and that the menstealers in Africa, and, inferentially, the slave-buyers in America, of that generation, sinned against God by their mutual traffic in flesh and blood. Slavery does not, like marriage, arise from the nature of man. It exists only from the peculiar condition of the slave class. And, therefore, a scriptural statement must not ignore a reference to providential developments; and it is right to characterize the relation by words which qualify its lawfulness.

Again. If you ask how circumstances can make a relation sinful, which in itself may be lawful, I reply, that circumstances always control the moral character of those relations and actions, which belong in morals to things "indifferent," or *adiaphora*. Some things, like idolatry and manstealing, are *mala in se*, and can be justified by no circumstances whatever. Other things, like polygamy, were tolerated under the Old Testament dispensation, but not under the New. Other things, as slavery, were tolerated under both dispensations; but neither under the Old nor the New dispensation was slavery recognized as lawful, apart from the circumstances of its origin and the attending conditions. The circumstances in the midst of which slaveholding finds itself, will always be an element to enter into its justification, or condemnation, at the bar of righteousness.

Again. If you press me still closer, and ask more particularly, how the qualifying and restrictive language employed by me, is consistent with the language of Scripture in regard to the duties of masters and slaves,—which many interpret as giving full and universal sanction to the system of slavery,—I reply, *first*, that the

mere injunction of relative duties, as has been already intimated, does not imply full approbation of a relation, which circumstances may for a time render lawful, and the duties of which require clear specification. The general duty of submission to the established government, does not prove that all despots are sinless in obtaining and in retaining their absolute power. Servants are required to be subject not only to good and gentle, but to froward masters, who make them suffer wrongfully. 1 Peter 2 : 18, 19. This, however, does not make such frowardness and cruelty, on the part of the masters, sinless. And, generally, the meekness with which we are required to bear insult and injury, does not justify those wrongs. Doddridge says, "I should think it unlawful to resist the most unjust power that could be imagined, if there was a probability of doing mischief by it." But this cannot make what is wrong and pernicious in any particular form or circumstances, sacred, divine, and immutable. Polygamy, which was tolerated under the Old Testament, under certain conditions, was a relation of mutual rights and obligations; but was polygamy, therefore, on a level with the marriage relation, and was it an institution that could be perpetuated without sin? Certainly not. Nor does the exhortation to masters and servants imply anything more than that the prescribed relative duties are to be discharged as long as the relation may be lawfully continued. *Secondly*, the duties of submission, heart-service, &c., on the part of the slaves, and the corresponding duties of the masters, belong to my statement as much as they do to yours. The performance of these mutual duties is essential to the solution of the problem of slavery, and to the inauguration of the new circumstances which may make its continuance a wrong. *Thirdly*, slaveholding not being a *malum in se*, no scriptural exhortation against the relation under all circumstances, would have been consistent with truth and righteousness. Hence, neither despotism nor slaveholding receives from the Scriptures the indiscriminating anathemas hurled by modern fanatics. Their temporary justification depends on circumstances, of which the rulers and masters of each generation must judge, as in sight of the Ruler and Master in heaven. *Fourthly*, The general spirit of the doctrines and precepts of the Bible operate unequivocally and decidedly against the permanence of slavery in the household, or of despotism in the state. An emphatic testimony is rendered on the pages of revelation against these relations, whose origin is in human sins and woes, and whose continuance is justified only by the public good. Instead of precise rules, which the wisdom of God has not prescribed for the eradication of all the evils of society, the Gospel substitutes sublime and heart-moving principles, which make the Christian "a law unto himself," and transform, through the Spirit, human nature into the image of the divine.

After all, we both agree in the fundamental position that slavery

may exist without sin; that the relation, in itself considered, is not sinful. You prefer your statement of the doctrine, and I prefer mine. You imagine, in comparing my statement with Scripture, that you discern "discord," and catch the sound of "quavering notes;" whilst, to my ears, your statement sounds like an old tune with unpleasant alterations, and withal, set on so high a key as to endanger falsetto in unskilful voices. It is my honest conviction that my formula approaches the nearest to the true doctrine of Scripture.

The correctness of my form of statement is, I think, confirmed by several considerations.

In the first place, this mode of stating the scriptural doctrine of slavery *coincides with the testimonies of the Presbyterian Church.*

The General Assembly of 1818 uses the following language:

"We do, indeed, tenderly sympathize with those portions of our Church and our country where the evil of slavery has been entailed; where a great, and the most virtuous, part of the community abhor slavery, and wish its extermination as sincerely as any others; but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally render an immediate and universal emancipation, *inconsistent alike with the safety and happiness of the master and slave.* With those who are *thus circumstanced*, we repeat that we tenderly sympathize. At the same time, we earnestly exhort them to continue, and, if possible, to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern, than a *regard to the public welfare* truly and indispensably demands."

Here, it will be seen, the doctrine of our Assembly is, that circumstances control the continuance of slavery. This relation is justifiable, or otherwise, according as "the happiness of the master and slave" and "the public welfare" are promoted by it.

The paper adopted by the General Assembly in 1845, by a vote of 168 to 13, assumes the same principle, and substantially adopts the form of my original statement. It says:

"The question, which is now unhappily agitating and dividing other branches of the Church, is, whether the holding of slaves is, *under all circumstances*, a heinous sin, calling for the discipline of the Church." p. 812. "The question, which this Assembly is called upon to decide is this: Do the Scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, *without regard to circumstances*, is a sin." p. 812.

You perceive that the question is stated in words which resemble very much the words of a "Conservative." Further:

"The Apostles did not denounce the *relation itself* as sinful." "The Assembly cannot denounce the holding of slaves as *necessarily* a heinous and scandalous sin." p. 812. "The existence of domestic slavery, *under the circumstances* in which it is found in the southern portion of the country, is no bar to Christian communion." p. 813.

Whilst my statement of the doctrine of slavery coincides with the utterances of the Church, many will think that yours comes far short of it. Whatever added explanations may cause it to approximate to the language of the General Assembly, the naked words are as dissimilar, as a leafless tree is from one of living green.

As you frequently quote DR. HODGE, I also will take the liberty of exhibiting the opinions of the distinguished Professor, in their true connection with the point at issue. I ask your particular attention to these extracts from the Biblical Repertory, which might be extended, if necessary.

“An equally obvious deduction [from the Scriptures] is, that slaveholding is *not necessarily sinful*.” 1836. p. 277.

“Both political despotism and domestic slavery belong in morals to the *adiaphora*, to things indifferent. They may be expedient or inexpedient, right or wrong, *according to circumstances*. Belonging to the same class, they should be treated in the same way. Neither is to be denounced as *necessarily sinful*, and to be abolished immediately *under all circumstances*.” p. 286.

“Slavery is a question of circumstances, and not a *malum in se*.” “Simply to prove that slaveholding interferes with natural rights, is not enough to justify the conclusion that it is *necessarily* and universally *sinful*.” p. 292.

“These forms of society [despotism, slavery, &c.] are not necessarily, or in themselves, just or unjust; but become one or the other *according to circumstances*.” p. 295.

“Monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, domestic slavery, are right or wrong, as they are, *for the time being, conducive to this great end* [intellectual and moral elevation] or the reverse.” p. 302.

“We have ever maintained that slaveholding is *not in itself sinful*; that the right to personal liberty is *conditioned* by the ability to exercise beneficially that right.” 1849, p. 601.

“Nothing can be more distinct than the right to hold slaves *in certain circumstances*, and the right to render slavery perpetual.” p. 603.

These quotations prove that Dr. Hodge unites with the great body of our Church, north and south, east and west, in limiting the lawfulness of slaveholding by the very terms of its formal definition, at the same time that he earnestly contends, with all who are on scriptural ground, that the relation, in itself considered, is not sinful. The “conservatives” of the Church everywhere uphold all the testimonies of the General Assembly in their true spirit and very letter.

Another consideration, confirming the belief that my statement is the better of the two, is that *it is more philosophical in its form*. The conditions of an ethical proposition relating to slavery, as furnished by yourself, are threefold. 1. The proposition must be in the usual form of ethical propositions. 2. It must be so expressed

as to require no explanations. 3. It should cover all the ground which Christianity covers.

1. The usual form of ethical propositions in regard to *adiaphora*, or things indifferent, includes a reference to circumstances. Whether the proposition be expressed in a positive or negative form, is not of much account, provided the meaning be clear. Your own statement is a negative one; but the difficulty is that its meaning is not plain. If the word *despotism*, or *war*, be substituted for *slavery* in our respective statements, I think you will see at once that your statement does not express the true idea, so well as mine. The proposition that "despotism, or war, is not a sin in the sight of God," is not a true ethical proposition. Because, like slavery, despotism and war seek their justification in circumstances. Circumstances cannot be omitted from a philosophical proposition on "things indifferent."

Your objection to my statement appears to be that it does not clearly admit the morality of slaveholding, but that it acquits the master with a sort of "whip, and clear him" judgment. This latter expression, if I understand it, means "strike first and then acquit." Very far from such a rude proceeding is the intention, or tendency, of my argument. The force of it is simply to put the slaveholder in a position which demands him to justify himself before God, which every Christian ought always to be ready to do. I explicitly maintain that the relation may be a lawful one, and that the Christian performance of its duties often brings peculiar honour upon the slaveholder, and calls into exercise some of the most shining graces of the Gospel. But slaveholding, although not *malum in se*, is not a natural and permanent phase of civilization. Like despotism or war, it is to be justified, or condemned, by the condition of things and the necessities of the case. It does not, in itself, imply an unchristian spirit, or unchristian conduct; and hence our Church has always refused to recognize it as under all circumstances an "offence" and "a bar to Christian communion." My proposition throws no suspicion, or reproach, upon any one who is in a true and justifiable position; and the very fact that it includes circumstances as an element in the solution of its morality, proves it to be philosophically sound.

2. If the proposition, in order to be correctly stated, must require no explanations, I think that my form has considerable advantage over yours. "Slavery is not necessarily, and in all circumstances sinful" is a general proposition, containing, without the need of explanation, the ethical truths on the subject. Your proposition, "slavery is not a sin in the sight of God" is liable at once to the doubt, whether it is intended to be a universal or a particular proposition; that is, whether you mean to say, "no slaveholding is sinful," or only that "some slaveholding is not sinful." The needed explanation, against which you protest, is actually given by you in another part of your letter, where you say that your statement by

no means "involves the idea that all slaveholding is sinless in the sight of God," or in other words, *some* slaveholding is not a sin. How this could be expressed with more rigid accuracy than in my formula of "slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful," it is for you to show. Why my formula does not more exactly express your belief than your own, which you would substitute for it, is also for you to show. Your statement fails to endure the philosophical test brought forward by yourself. It must have explanations, before the reader can even understand whether it is a universal or particular proposition.

Permit me to add, that even some of your explanations seem to need explanation. For example, in your illustration about the despotism of France, you say that this despotism is "*at the present day, demanded by the general good of the French nation,*" and then go on to say, that "the time may come when the general good will demand a *different form of government in France.*" Here you propound my doctrine exactly; and if you will only allow this explanation about despotism to enter into your proposition about slaveholding, it becomes identical with my own. But inasmuch as you insist, that "every general proposition shall be so expressed as to bear examination," "*apart from all explanation,*" you prove that your proposition, as it stands, is not a general, but a particular one, and that mine is really the universal and the philosophical proposition. Again; your proposition demands explanation, as a practical standard of right conduct as well as of sound philosophy. The proposition, that "slaveholding is not a sin" requires explanation, if you apply the doctrine to the first generation, who, as is generally believed, wrongfully purchased the slaves, and thus abetted manstealing and entailed this unnatural relation upon succeeding generations. It requires explanation, if, anywhere at the South, the good of one or more slaves, and the glory of God, would be promoted by their emancipation. It requires explanation in the Free States, where slavery is prohibited by law, and where the welfare of society does not require the existence of this institution. On the other hand, my proposition that "slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful" expresses the truth without explanation. No proposition can be expected to define the circumstances under which slavery in every instance may be justified or not. It is sufficient for the purposes of a general statement, to give slaveholding a place among things indifferent (*adiaphora*), and to imply that it is not a permanent institution, based, like marriage, upon the law of God, but one that owes its continuance to the necessities of the public welfare.

3. If the proposition must cover all the ground covered by the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, then I think that your statement again suffers in comparison with mine. This point has been already discussed. The substance of the scriptural doctrine, in my opinion, is briefly this: First. Slaveholding, in itself considered, is not

sinful ; or, it is not a *malum in se*. Secondly. It is a relation of mutual rights and obligations as long as it exists. And, thirdly. The general spirit and precepts of the Gospel are opposed to its perpetuity. I consider that my proposition, in this and in other respects, meets your ethical conditions better than your own.

A third collateral consideration, in favour of my form of stating the scriptural doctrine of Slavery, is, that it commends itself more to the enlightened conscience of the Christian slaveholder.

Christians, whose minds and hearts are imbued with the spirit of their Lord, cannot regard with complacency an institution, whose origin is in wrong, and whose continuance depends upon the inferior condition of a large class of their fellow-men. During my residence at the South, of three years, I do not remember of hearing any justification of slavery, except that which appealed to the actual necessities of the case. It was everywhere said : "The slaves are not fit to be free ; neither their own nor the general welfare would be promoted by immediate emancipation." The lawfulness of continuing the relation under such circumstances could not be called in question. I am confident that the enlightened consciences of southern Christians prefer a definition of slavery which includes the providential aspect of the case. No abstract proposition, like yours, will place the vindication of slavery on high enough ground to pacify the consciences of those Christians, who hold their fellow-men in bondage.

But whilst the language of my statement of the doctrine really justifies, with a high reason, the lawfulness of the relation, if lawful under the circumstances, the other advantage it has over your statement is in keeping the conscience awake to the obligations of improving the condition of the slaves, with a view to a restoration of their natural rights in a more perfect form of society. If slavery is only to be justified by circumstances, the inquiry must press itself upon the conscience of the Christian master, whether, in the first place, the circumstances and condition of society constitute a sufficient plea, in his judgment, for his present position as a slaveholder ; and in the second place, whether he is doing all he can, as a citizen of the state, and a member of the household of Christ, to remove all unjust enactments from the statute book, and to break down the barriers of intellectual and moral degradation, which are in the way of ultimate emancipation. Although "slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful," it may become so under circumstances where the elevation of the slave concurs with other conditions in rendering his emancipation a benefit.

I claim, therefore, that my statement of the doctrine of slavery surpasses yours, both in its power to relieve the conscience, if charged with the guilt of the existing relation, and in its power to alarm the conscience, if in danger of neglecting the whole duties implied in the relation. My knowledge of southern Christian

society gives me boldness in placing this view of the subject before the minds, and hearts, and consciences, of my brethren; for never has it been my privilege to be brought in contact with purer and more devoted servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, than are to be found in the Southern States. With all deference, and in all confidence, I submit to them the truthfulness of the positions taken in this letter.

There is still one more consideration that gives scriptural weight to my form of stating the doctrine of slavery, namely, its *practical power to resist error*.

The fundamental principle of ultra-abolitionism is that slaveholding is in itself sinful. The only efficacious mode of encountering this fanaticism, is to show from the Bible, that it rests upon a false foundation. The doctrines that abolitionism cannot resist, are, first, that the relation itself must neither be confounded with the unjust laws which define the *system*, nor with the inadequate performance of the duties of the relation; and secondly, that slaveholding is not *malum in se*, but right or wrong according to circumstances. This double-edged sword of truth will pierce to the dividing asunder of the bones of rampant abolitionism. Indeed, some of the distinguished leaders of that faction have virtually conceded the scriptural efficiency of these positions, and the great mass of people in the Free States will do homage to their truth. The doctrine that "slavery is not necessarily and in all circumstances sinful," is the contradictory of the abolition dogma; and its establishment in this very form, will most effectually arrest the encroachments of error, and vindicate the cause of righteousness in a perverse generation. Your bare statement, however, that "slaveholding is not a sin in the sight of God," does not meet the case; like a spent arrow, it falls short of the mark. It is a correct statement, to a certain extent; but it does not include providential circumstances, which necessarily enter into the morality of slaveholding. As a weapon to do battle with, your proposition invites assault, without the power to repel. It lacks the scriptural characteristic of fighting a good fight. It carries with it no available and victorious force. It provokes the conscience of the North; it lulls the conscience of the South.

This last sentence indicates an evil on the other extreme. Ultra pro-slavery is as much to be deprecated as ultra anti-slavery. The idea that slaveholding is a divine ordinance, and that it may be lawfully perpetuated to the end of time, is a monstrous doctrine,—derogatory to the spirit and principles of Scripture, to the reason and conscience of mankind, to the universal sway of Providence, and to the glory of Christian civilization. A distinguished slaveholder of the South, who owns several hundred slaves, and who is not a communicant in the church, after hearing an ultra pro-slavery sermon, came out of the house of God, expressing strong disapprobation of such sentiments; and, stamping his foot on the ground,

declared that he could not endure them. He added that his only justification, before God and the world, for holding slaves, was in the necessities of the case. The attempt to fortify slavery by extravagant and unreasonable positions can only do harm. Extremists on one side always beget extremists on the other. Anti-slavery at the North has been the means of developing, to an extent before unknown, ultra pro-slavery at the South. The institution is now claimed, by some, to be a divine ordinance, like marriage or civil government; African bondage is sought to be justified by the original diversities of the human race; and even the righteousness of the slave trade itself is now openly vindicated in this land of liberty and age of light. One strong objection to your statement of the doctrine is, that it seems to give countenance to erroneous and exaggerated views. It will be accepted, I fear, by the ultra pro-slavery party, as a good enough statement to be inscribed upon their banners. I cordially acquit you of any intention to contribute to the propagation of extreme opinions. But ought not a Presbyterian minister, of your position and influence, to be arrayed against such sentiments, beyond the possibility of misconception? Hitherto, little impression has been made on our Church by ultraists on either side. We at the North are able, with God's blessing, to maintain the scriptural ground against anti-slavery fanaticism; and we ask our brethren at the South to repel the irruptions of pro-slavery fanaticism with equal determination. In order to do this successfully, the South needs a more guarded statement of doctrine than the one you have propounded. That statement is practically inefficacious in resisting ultraism on either side.

For these various reasons, I adhere to the belief that my original proposition on the subject of slaveholding, although not, perhaps, as perfect as it might be, is substantially correct, and is more scriptural and comprehensive than yours.

My next letter will follow the course of discussion which your second letter has marked out for me. It will be on the subject of "EMANCIPATION AND THE CHURCH."

Yours truly,
C. VAN RENSSELAER.

CAWNPORE—THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MASSACRE.

GOD is with his saints. It is a time to die. The little Christian band have learnt their doom. There they stand with the spirit of martyrs. The grace of God is sustaining grace in the hour of human need. Little thought our beloved brethren and sisters, when they first trod with hope upon India's soil, that those, whom they came to bless, would turn to curse and slay! But the great Master himself received death from human hands.

Oh what thoughts of prayer and love and trust went up to our heavenly Father, on the night before the massacre at Cawnpore! What spiritual strivings alternately agitated and calmed the souls, soon to be separated from mortal bodies! What holy sympathy and grace came down from heaven, from the Father, Son, and Spirit, to sustain the missionaries of the Church on the eve of martyrdom! How many tender thoughts of kindred and of home were mingled with the solemn consecrations, anticipating immortality!

FREEMAN! Thou missionary veteran* of a score of years, methinks I see thee, leading the devotions of the saints of Christ Jesus, ready "to be forever with their Lord." Near thee stand Campbell, and Johnson, and McMullen, our beloved brethren, with their wives, and thine! And there, in the little group, are the brethren and sisters of other churches, all unburdening their hearts in private and public supplications, and learning to soar upwards and upwards, in preparation for the final flight from time into eternity. And oh, ye little children of the good Shepherd, who cling with unwonted grasp to fathers and mothers, fear not; the voice of Jesus calls. Blessed little ones, ye will soon be with parents, secure in glory! Hark! the prayers are ended. The massacre has begun!

* * * * *

Let us listen to the last words of a young Christian female, on the night before the massacre. The *United Presbyterian Magazine*, from which excellent periodical we extract the letter, has the following few words of preface:

"There are Indian letters which contain more graphic details than the one published below; but of published letters, few which so distinctly testify to the help of Christ in the hour of trial. The writer was naturally a most delicate and fragile young lady, so that her calm courage in the terrible hour is to be attributed to grace

* The Rev. JOHN E. FREEMAN went as a missionary to India in 1838. He early devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and was aided by the funds of the Board of Education for seven years.

alone. She was a member of one of our churches, and a Sabbath-school teacher, in Glasgow, and left for India three years ago, to join her brother, an officer of the civil service there. There is little doubt that she shared the fate of those whom Nena Sahib massacred on the approach of Havelock.

CAWNPORE, May 18th, 1857.

MY DEAREST JOAN,—I will attempt to write you likely for the last time. Things are all in a sad state in India. The native regiments have risen up against us in every station except Calcutta; they have set up a native prince on the throne in Delhi. In some stations they have not left one European alive. They are killing men, women, and children, wherever they can find them. Last night they began in Cawnpore, by burning our houses; but no life is lost here yet. To-night we expect to share a hard fate. We are perfectly unprovided for—only 120 soldiers here! This morning a young gentleman came to take me to the house of a friend, where there were two ladies, friends of mine, with their husbands. I tried to get my brother to go, but he would not—he is of importance—they would give a deal for his head—he would not leave his duty. The rest of us are all young, and go to the barracks to-night for protection, and I hope to prevail on him to go too; if not, I must return to the house with him, for I am determined to share his fate. When I left the house this morning he said, “Good-bye, Susan, I hope we shall meet again.” If I live, I shall send you a newspaper by every mail, till things are settled. It is fearful to hear of the cold-blooded cruelty of the Sepoys. They have killed every European they came across. We can get no word from some stations; they have cut the telegraph lines, and robbed the mail. I am not sure if this will ever reach you. If it do, you will see that I remembered you all to the last. My full expectation is that *we shall be cut to pieces this very night*; but I beg of you and all our John Street friends, to pray for the poor Europeans of India. The Lord have mercy on us all. We know no help but Him. But I think I hear Him saying, “Fear not, Susan, I am thy God. Be not dismayed.” I don’t know how it is, but *I think I hear Him mention my very name*. If I fall, I have a blessed hope. I am not afraid. Have no doubt of my happy state. And now, dearest Joan, I must say, Farewell! Best love to your mother and my beloved friends, Agnes and Grace. The Lord be with you all. Trusting to meet you all in the happy land, farewell.

SUSAN G——.

Susan! we know thee only as a child of Christ, and now a transfigured saint in his glorious presence. Welcome the day when the saints of all ages shall meet together, in the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, in heaven!

Household Thoughts.

A CHRISTIAN FARM HOUSE.

WE have visited a large family, comprising numerous sons and daughters. Though not very wealthy, they are among the most comfortable people we ever knew, and especially remarkable for an air of cheerfulness or lightheartedness, which greatly recommends their religion. Except at certain appointed hours of separation, there is little silence, and nothing that looks like shyness or insulation. Old Mr. Truman loves to say, that a Christian house should be remarkable for gentleness, sympathy, and fellowship, and that it is sad when good people wear masks in regard to one another.

It is very pleasant to observe how religion operates, quietly but constantly, in the Truman house. Mr. Truman often lays down the maxim, Householders should embrace every opportunity of having all the inmates together. Hence he does not hurry away from family worship, but always follows it by some agreeable chat, or he calls on Jacob and Rachel for a hymn. He also gives his vote for long meals. "Why," says he, "should we abridge the only seasons at which we are all together? Separations will come surely and soon enough." He also has a notion that leisurely mastication is good for the health. Nothing more displeases him than a sullen, moody feeding, which, he says, resembles that of brutes. "Let us come together," adds he, "more for the mental than the bodily repast." So also, the good old gentleman and his wife sit together, in their two arm-chairs, during a good part of every evening. We can never forget some of the twilight scenes, when all their elder children were yet at home, and when innocent story and song made the hours fly apace. The children have been taught, from their earliest years, to bring into the common stock, whatever they have separately seen or heard during the day. "You owe it to me," says the good old lady, "because I am solitary many hours, and because I am getting old, and can neither read much nor go abroad often."

The Trumans are great people for reading aloud. It would be hard to reckon up the hundreds of volumes which they have thus employed. While one reads, a dozen can sew, knit, or draw. Love is promoted by this fellowship of enjoyment. For the same reason, they have much singing together of sacred pieces. These things drive away all habits of concealment and undue privacy, produce union between the older and younger members, and so render home lovely.

You see, in a moment, that this is a Christian family; although religion is not brought in by the head and shoulders, as the saying is. It somehow comes out, whether they will or no, like the odour of spring violets from the chimney-place. Mr. Truman began early to bring in such guests as were at once agreeable and pious, and he has always preferred these to fashionable, or rich, or even learned visitors. "Let our children fall in with pilgrims who go the same way that we do;" so he often speaks, and he is fond of repeating this. "In a godly house the pleasures of one should be the pleasures of all." From the time the little ones could be told about their own baptism, they were treated as members of the visible Church, and instructed to live accordingly. "You are lambs," he would say to little Luke and John, "not young wolves, and your pleasures should be lamblike." We always observe at Broad Oaks, so the farm is named, that the pleasures of the elders are constantly overflowing upon the younger ones.

These worthy parents do not undervalue the expression of affectionate feeling. "Expression," says Mr. Truman, "increases the feeling expressed; it is so in our anger, so in our grief, and so in our prayers." Accordingly there are numerous little salutations and respects, which have become somewhat oldfashioned, especially in America. On retiring for the night, quite a row of happy mouths are held up for the parental kiss.

Having spoken of family worship, we ought to say, that it is made a source of great enjoyment at Broad Oaks. All the old servants are present, with books in their hands; and even during busy seasons, such as harvest, or cheese-making, the hired men and women are invited to this service. On such occasions the old gentleman almost forgets his being a layman, and preaches a bit of a sermon. One of these, George, the wagoner, assures me, was better than Mr. Maultext's.

The Sabbath, you may be sure, is a great day at Mr. Truman's, every way the brightest in the week. All needless labour is intermitted. As the village church is a mile off, Mrs. Truman and the smaller children have to use a carriage, but the driver never makes this an excuse for being away from either the beginning or end of the service, and the walkers are almost always a serious company. But the truly domestic observance of the Sabbath takes place after the conclusion of the public ordinances. Then, after the old Presbyterian manner, all the family, including the domestics, are gathered in the large sitting-room, for the purpose of catechizing. The old gentleman disdains to use a book in asking questions, having in early life committed to memory both questions and answers in their exact order. The first answer, for honour's sake, is always repeated by Mrs. Truman, and then the children and servants take their turn. Sandy McFee, an old Scotch ditcher, has a peculiar satisfaction in thus saying his "CARRITCH," as he calls it in true old-country phrase. The business ends with singing

several psalms and hymns, and the ordinary service of Scripture and prayer. It is not a heavy but a cheerful hour, and one which every child will remember in after years. As the parents have advanced in life, they have learned the importance of more frequently recurring to divine things, in their ordinary conversation, in order that their dependents may see that their happiness springs from the right source. Mr. Truman declares this to be agreeable to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, and remarks that it is neglected by some otherwise worthy persons, who thus defraud their offspring, by undue reserve, of a powerful motive to seek their comfort in serving God.

As our good friends at Broad Oaks, according to the scripture rule, are "given to hospitality," they are seldom without guests, and in the midst of a good farm, in a rich country, they are able to entertain generously, though without profusion. That which strikes every visitor is, that it is a *Christian house*. The spring of their pleasures is Religion. The progress of Christ's kingdom interests them more than worldly politics. Mrs. Truman is not a person of robust health, and sometimes is almost a prisoner in her room during a long winter. But from her retirement she constantly has an eye fixed upon the advancement of Christianity in the world. The *Missionary Gazette* and the *Foreign Missionary* are at her elbow, and she can, on the map, point out to the children all the stations of our now afflicted Foreign Board. Strangers who enter the house, sometimes carry away a new spirit in regard to such matters; and learn to consider the glory of God, in the renewal and salvation of souls, as the most important object of life and effort. Many a gentle but penetrating word is spoken to them, at favourable moments, causing them, if children of God, to be awakened to fresh zeal, and if unrenewed, to discern a beauty and a power in simple piety, which they never knew before. "I should be sorry," Mrs. Truman meekly said one day, "if any one should tarry under our roof without doing good or getting good."

"It is the most Bible-house in the land," said a poor woman who had spent some weeks there in attendance on the dairy. And true enough, Madam would call her in to hear a beautiful chapter about Naomi and Ruth. Miss Jerusha would examine her in the commandments, Luke and John would puzzle her with questions as to who Zeruah was; and even little Lotty, seven years old, would ask her, while busy with her curd, how many cheeses David carried to the camp, what his "carriage" was; 1 Sam. 17 : 18, 22, or what sort of a "compass" Paul and Luke "fetched," in sailing to Rhegium; Acts 28 : 13. Books which explain the Bible are favourites in the house. Mr. Truman, who takes his hand at the scythe, has been known to read a very interesting piece out of Kitto, to his mowers as they took nooning under the great tulip tree. With the aid of his daughters, he teaches a Bible-class, which is chiefly composed of farm labourers and servants. "One

chapter of the Proverbs every day," says he, "helps a man's thrift as well as his piety." And again: "Bible rules are profitable for this world, as well as the world to come."

The Trumans live in great harmony. Among so many souls, ill humours will sometimes break out; but these are always subdued by the general temper of the house, which is one of affection. It is very hard for any rancorous weeds to grow high in the hearts of those who daily read and pray together. The eldest son and two of the daughters are married and have families of their own; but they love to bring their little ones to the great oaken grove, which gives name to the place, and to drink at the clear spring which refreshed their own childhood, and to the happy pair who were their own first and best instructors. On communion seasons, some of the finest horses which stand tied in the maple grove west of the church, are ridden by our worthy farmer's grandsons, and the neighbours have long ago discovered that the old gentleman has brought up his young folks in habits which are good for this world as well as the next. Lawyer Reynard, who is famed for sharp practice, and sometimes talks with the sheriff before he tries a cause, has been known to throw up a bad case because there was a Truman on the jury.

N. B. The Presbytery meets next spring in the neighbourhood of Broad Oaks.

C. Q.

A BABY SONG.

Come, white angel, to baby and me:
 Touch his blue eyes with image of sleep,
 In his surprise he will cease to weep:
 Hush, child, the angels are coming to me!

Come, white dove, to baby and me;
 Softly whirr in the silent air,
 Flutter about his golden hair:
 Hark, child, the doves are cooing to thee!

Come, white lilies, to baby and me;
 Drowsily nod before his eyes,
 So full of wonder, so round, and wise:
 Hist, child, the lily bells tinkle for thee.

Come, white moon, to baby and me;
 Gently glide o'er the ocean of sleep,
 Silver the waves of its shadowy deep:
 Sleep, child, and the whitest of dreams to thee.

Extract.

Historical and Biographical.

THE ANCESTRY OF WASHINGTON.

[The following brief remarks on the Ancestry of Washington were sent for publication in this Magazine, by the late Reverend RICHARD WEBSTER, about four years ago. It was not convenient to publish them at the time; and they are now given to the public as among the last specimens of the lamented author's mode of making memoranda on historical points of interest.—ED.]

THE ANCESTRY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.

THE distinguished historian, ROSCOE, in a letter to an American gentleman, said: "It is now about thirty years since I had the good fortune to form an acquaintance with Sir ISAAC HEARD, Garter King-at-Arms, who was a kind friend, an excellent patriot, and a worthy man. On visiting him one day in his office in Doctors' Commons, I observed a portrait over the chimney-piece, not sufficiently characterized for me to decipher, and, to the best of my recollection, not in the first style of art. I could, however, perceive, that it was not the representation of the personage who might have been expected to preside at the fountain of honour; and, on my expressing my surprise to Sir Isaac, and inquiring whose portrait it was, he replied, in his usual energetic manner, 'Whose is it? Whose should it be, but the portrait of the greatest man of the age,—GENERAL WASHINGTON?' And, turning to his archives, he took out some papers, consisting of several sheets, closely written, saying, 'Here, sir, is the genealogy and family history of General Washington, which he has, at my request, furnished in his own handwriting, and which I shall have a particular pleasure in preserving among the most precious records of my office.'"

In the Office of Archives, at Washington, are preserved the Letters of Sir Isaac Heard to General Washington. He introduces himself as having served in America, I think, under General Braddock. Washington replied, that he did not know certainly what county, in England, his ancestors came from; but proceeded immediately to make inquiries, and had copies made for him of the wills on record in Virginia. These are in the Archives. The will of John Washington,* the first of the name in this country, a collateral ancestor, opens with the expression of his hope of that resurrection to eternal life, which is secured by Jesus Christ to all his elect people.

Selina, Countess of Huntington, desired to promote the welfare of the Indians, and, in the hope of inducing Washington to become her trustee in their behalf, she wrote to him and expressed her belief that she had the honour of being related to him. Her ancestor, Earl Ferrers, of the house of Shirley, had married the daughter and heiress of Lawrence Washington, Esq., of Caresden, in Wiltshire.†

General Washington replied, that he would gladly serve so good a

* It is dated January 22, 1697.

† Lady Huntington's own father, the second Earl Ferrers, was named WASHINGTON Shirley, after his mother.

cause to the extent of his power, but that the situation of the Cherokee Indians was not such as to afford at that time encouragement to make the attempt she desired.

K. H.

The following account, by SPARKS, of Lady Huntington's Indian scheme alluded to, and of Washington's interest in it, may be acceptable to our readers :

“The Countess of Huntington, celebrated for her religious enthusiasm and liberal charities, formed a scheme for civilizing and Christianizing the North American Indians. Being a daughter of the Earl of Ferrers, who was descended through the female line from a remote branch of the Washington family, she claimed relationship to General Washington, and wrote to him several letters respecting her project of benevolence and piety in America. It was her design to form, at her own charge, in the neighbourhood of some of the Indian tribes, a settlement of industrious emigrants, who, by their example and habits, should gradually introduce among them the arts of civilization; and missionaries were to teach them the principles of Christianity. Lady Huntington proposed, that the government of the United States should grant a tract of wild lands upon which her emigrants and missionaries should establish themselves. A scheme, prompted by motives so pure, and founded on so rational a basis, gained at once the approbation and countenance of Washington. He wrote to the President of Congress, and to the governors of some of the States, expressing favourable sentiments of Lady Huntington's application. Political and local reasons interfered to defeat the plan. In the first place, it was thought doubtful whether a colony of foreigners settled on the Western frontier, near the English on one side and the Spaniards on the other, would in the end prove conducive to the public tranquillity. And, in the next place, the States individually had ceded all their wild lands to the Union, and Congress were not certain that they possessed power to grant any portion of the new territory for such an object. Hence the project was laid aside, although Washington offered to facilitate it as far as he could on a smaller scale, by allowing settlers to occupy his own lands, and be employed according to Lady's Huntington's views.”

Review and Criticism.

GNOMON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By JOHN ALBERT BENGEL. Now first translated into English; with original Notes, Explanatory and Illustrative. Revised and edited by the Rev. ANDREW R. FAUSSET, M. A., of Trinity College, Dublin. Vols. 1st and 2d, 8vo. pp. 557 and 437. Published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh. Imported and sold by Smith, English & Co., Philadelphia.

THESE two volumes are only a part of the work of this learned author. They are to be followed by three others, which will be published early next year. Smith, English & Co. are agents for the sale of the work in this country, and they will furnish the five volumes to subscribers at \$8, or by mail, prepaid, at \$10. The paper and typography are excellent.

Bengel was a German Lutheran, and he wrote and published this work in Latin, more than a century ago, since which time it has passed through several editions, though never till now translated into English. The editor commences his preface by remarking, that "It is quite superfluous to write in praise of the Gnomon of Bengel. Ever since the year in which it was first published, A. D. 1742, up to the present time, it has been growing in estimation, and has been more and more widely circulated among the scholars of all countries. Though modern criticism has furnished many valuable additions to our materials for New Testament exegesis, yet, in some respects, Bengel stands out, '*facile princeps*,' among all who have laboured, or who as yet labour in that important field. He is unrivalled in felicitous brevity, combined with what seldom accompanies that excellence, namely, perspicuity. Terse, weighty, and suggestive, he often, as a modern writer observes (Archdeacon Hare), 'condenses more matter into a line than can be extracted from pages of other writers.'" We quote these sentences, because they express a true and just eulogium on the work.

The editor states further, what we have found to be true, that Bengel was an Arminian. On this point he remarks, "In the passages which form the subject of controversy between Calvinists and Arminians, Bengel takes the view adopted by the latter, and, in this respect, I do not concur with him. But while he thus gives undue prominence, as it would seem to me, to the responsibility and freedom of man in these passages, yet, in the general tenor of his work, there breathes such a holy reverence for God's sovereignty, and such spiritual unctio, that the most extreme Calvinist would, for the most part, be unable to discover to what section of opinions he attached himself; and as to controverted passages, would feel inclined to say, '*Quam talis sis, utinam noster esses.*'" John Wesley called him "the great Bengelius;" "that great light of the Christian world;" "the most pious, the most judicious, and the most laborious, of all modern commentators on the New Testament."

On some other points, besides those belonging to the Arminian controversy, Bengel held peculiar views. He seems to have been a little inclined to mysticism, did not distinguish sufficiently between ordinary faith and the faith of miracles, and believed that some miracles had occurred even in his day, and he advanced some unusual views concerning the millennium, particularly as to the time of its commencement. This last we derive not from the volumes now before us, but from his Annotations on the Book of REVELATION, not yet published in English. But though these things are blemishes, which detract somewhat from the reliability of the author, they affect only a small portion of the work as compared with the whole. They are also not so serious an objection as they would be if the work was adapted to popular use. Being a critical exegesis of the original text, it will be read and appreciated only by biblical scholars, who, it may be hoped, will read it with sufficient caution not to be injured by a few such vagaries. Notwithstanding these errors and mysticisms, we doubt not our ministers will regard the work as a highly rich and valuable aid in studying the holy Scriptures. A considerable number may probably possess the work already in the original Latin. If they do not, we recommend to them the purchase of this edition, now for the first time offered in English.

A word concerning the title. Says the author, "I have long since given the name of GNOMON, a modest, and, as I think, appropriate title, to these *Exegetical Annotations*, which perform only the office of an *Index*; and I should have chosen the term *Index*, as the title of my work, but for the misconception which would have arisen, in the minds of most persons, from the ordinary and technical use of that term [*i. e. a Registry or Table of Contents*]. It is, in short, my intention, briefly to *point out, or indicate*, the full force of words and sentences, in the New Testament, which, though really and inherently belonging to them, is not always observed by all at first sight, so that the reader, being introduced by the straight road into the text, may find as rich pasture there as possible. The Gnomon points the way with sufficient clearness. If you are wise, the text itself teaches you all things."

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOKS OF KINGS. By KARL FRIEDRICH KEIL, D.D., P.H.D., Professor of Exegetical Theology and the Oriental Languages in the University of Dorpat. Translated by JAMES MURPHY, LL.D., Professor of Hebrew: Belfast. Supplemented by Commentary on the Books of Chronicles. By ERNST BERTHAU, Professor in Göttingen. Translated by JAMES MARTIN, B.A.: Edinburgh. Published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh: 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 450—463. For sale by Smith & English, Philadelphia.

IN examining a theological work, by a modern German author, our feelings are similar to those indicated by a remark which is reported to have been made by a popular American preacher, concerning a person who might profess to be an angel. First, said he, I would examine his plumes, and ascertain whether he had an angel's plumes. If this were not satisfactory, I would put him in the fire, and see whether he would burn. And if still further examination were necessary, I would throw him into the water, and see whether he would drown. Modern German theologians are justly viewed, in our country, with suspicion; and hence when their productions fall into our hands, we feel under special necessity to scrutinize their character, in order to learn whether they are entitled to confidence, as safe and evangelical. We looked at the name of the publishers, T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, whose reputation as publishers is some guarantee that the work possesses real value. We read the names of the translators, whose locations in Ireland and Scotland indicate that they belong to the school of evangelical Protestants. We turned to the prefatory note by Professor Murphy, the translator of the Books of Kings, who says, concerning Keil, that "he is one of the safest of German commentators," and that "the present work is distinguished by a sober, judicious, and careful investigation of the meaning of the text, a large and well-selected array of solid information, and a firm attachment to evangelical doctrine. The reader may not accord with his opinions or conclusions on every point, but he cannot fail to reap much benefit from his well-directed labours, and acknowledge his valuable aid in the study of this important portion of holy Scripture."

With such recommendations of the work, we were prepared to examine it without the prejudice unavoidably produced, in the first instance, by its German authorship. And we are happy to say, that in our examination, we have discovered nothing which savours of that loose anti-scriptural rationalism, which characterizes so largely the biblical learning of that country. On the contrary, the author defends, when occasion offers,

the plenary inspiration and divine authority of these historic records, against the "rationalist criticism" of De Wette, Granberg, and other German writers of that school. We have looked through the work with as much attention as our time and engagements would allow, and have found, on every page, evidences of diligent and learned research, which will render the work a valuable aid to the biblical student, in studying this portion of God's word. The same author has published a work on Chronicles. But as the character of that work was "purely apologetical;" being "written as an answer to the objections of De Wette and Dahler, to the credibility of the two Books of Chronicles," the publishers "thought it unadvisable to issue it in connection with his Commentary on the Books of Kings." For this reason they have substituted "Berthau's work," "the latest commentary that has appeared in Germany on the Books of Chronicles." "The reader will also find, between brackets, occasional extracts from Keil's work on the Chronicles, which it has been thought desirable to introduce, on account of their containing a fuller or more satisfactory elucidation of the text than is to be found in the original work." We commend these volumes to the attention of our ministers and students of theology.

Ceremonies, on the 4th of July, 1857, at the Laying of the Corner Stone of the National Monument, to be Erected to the Memory of HENRY CLAY, at Lexington, Ky., together with the Oration delivered on the occasion, by the Rev. ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, D.D., LL.D., 1857.

THIS oration is one of Dr. Breckinridge's thoughtful and eloquent productions. Ancestral ties, intimate personal friendship, political associations, and a mind capable of appreciating the great Kentucky statesman, all pointed to Dr. Breckinridge as the Orator of the day. Most worthily were the duties of the solemn occasion discharged. Dr. Breckinridge divides the life of Henry Clay into four periods. 1. From the time of his birth, in Hanover County, near Richmond, Va., on the 12th of April, 1777, until the year 1791, when he removed to Richmond. 2. At Richmond, Henry Clay first became a clerk in a store, then Chancery Clerk, which brought him in constant contact with Chancellor Wythe, after which he spent one year in the law office of Mr. Brooke, then Attorney-General of the State. 3. "In 1803 Mr. Clay was elected for the first time to the lower house of the Kentucky Legislature; and before 1811, when he commenced his career as a member of the lower house of Congress, he had served five or six years in the Kentucky House of Representatives, two or three times as Speaker of that body, and also in the Senate of the United States, first during the year 1806, and afterwards during the years 1809 and 1810. This lapse of thirteen years, from 1797 to 1811, constitutes the third period of Mr. CLAY's career; at the close of which we find him, in his thirty-fourth year, taking rank, by universal consent, with the first lawyers, the first politicians, the first orators, and the first statesmen of his time." 4. "And now we are in the midst of that great period of his life,—commencing with his election as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and terminating with his death,—during which all his great endowments became so conspicuous, through services and efforts so illustrious. He had never before been a member of that house; which

renders it still more remarkable that he should have been elected its Speaker on the day he took his seat. He was re-elected Speaker six times; and after occupying the chair about thirteen years, left it to become Secretary of State in the Cabinet of the younger ADAMS, in 1825, which situation he held till the close of that administration in 1829." With the exception of eight years, Henry Clay was a member of the United States Senate from this time until his death in 1851.

Our space will only allow us to give some extracts, showing Dr. Breckinridge's estimate of Henry Clay's character, which we are sure will be read with interest.

"My own judgment is that the great, original, and all-pervading element of the greatness of HENRY CLAY, was, so to speak, the extreme *naturalness* of the man. He was a man like the times in which he lived, like the men who surrounded him, like the nature he bore. There was nothing distorted about his nature—nothing out of sympathy with his times—nothing that could make him, or any one else, feel that he was not a man of the very living generation. He was not a common,—on the other hand he was a grand specimen, but yet he was a real and faithful specimen of a man, of an American, of a Kentuckian. And all who beheld him would have owned, if their thought had been so directed, that there stood before them a type, a noble type it may be, but yet a real type of a man, an American, a Kentuckian, of that long and glorious period, commencing with the Revolution, and terminating in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was thus that there was begotten between him and the generation with which he acted, a sympathy so profound and so enduring: and if he had never been called to act in public affairs, except concerning questions with regard to which the national mind was substantially agreed—he would necessarily have been as much the idol of the nation, as he was of those who shared his principles. In that case he would have taken his place in history, by the side of those heroes and sages of the human race, who with this same glorious endowment enjoyed a higher fortune, and whose names, scattered thinly across the track of ages, keep our race alive to the highest glory which humanity can reach, and to the sublime conditions of attaining it.

"With such a nature God had bestowed on him a personal presence and bearing, as impressive as any mortal ever possessed. Whatever was in his heart his very organization and manner seemed perfectly fitted to express; whatever was in his mind his outward man seemed in all things exactly calculated to make articulate. The force which all that in its widest sense can be called action lends to every utterance, abode in him without measure; and with him, as with all great masters of human passion, the voice and the diction were not less striking than the thought and the emotion which they enriched and made vital. The spirit which animated an organization so fine seemed, as is not uncommon in the highest class of men, to possess two natures: one genial, playful, loving, gentle, frank, and placable; the other firm, wary, heroic, persistent, and capable of the most daring, fiery, and impetuous movements; and the two combined made up a temper which was habitually kind, self-reliant, lofty, and just. The basis of his moral character was akin to that which lies at the foundation of supreme moral excellence,—integrity and love of truth. Honest in all things, truthful always: to deceive, to prevaricate, to act unfairly,—the refuges of base, timid, and feeble natures,—no more entered into his thoughts in the high and difficult emergencies of life, than in the daily round of his commonest duties. His was a high, fair, brave, upright nature. His intellectual character, by which he will be chiefly known to posterity, was, as all men acknowledge, of the highest order. Clear, powerful, and comprehensive, no subject seemed to be difficult under its steady insight, and it embraced with equal readiness every department of human knowledge to which it became his duty to attend. A great and original thinker, he encountered without hesitation the widest and most intricate problems, and acted with absolute confidence on the conclusions at which he arrived. Sagacious in

the highest degree, in detecting all fallacy, the highest studies of ordinary minds amused his leisure; and speculations which begun in his day to pass for the elements of science in certain departments of the wide domain of political philosophy, he publicly classed with the fictitious literature of the hour. No genius was ever capable of a wider diversity of use than his. And the vast and searching common sense, which was the most striking characteristic of his intellect, revealed the purity, the truth, and the force with which the ultimate elements of our rational nature dwelt and acted in his noble understanding. If we add now the power of that patient, dauntless, and heroic will, which executed the desires of such a heart, and obeyed the behests of such an intellect, we complete the survey of this extraordinary man. It was undoubtedly as an orator, that he was most illustrious in his own generation. Posterity may change this verdict, and give him superior rank, both as a statesman and as a man consummate in the greatest practical affairs. But if the ages to come could be made aware of the influence which was added to his great discourses by the power of his action, his voice, and his imposing presence; if they could appreciate the rapidity and truth of his intuition, the depth of his common sense, the grasp of his understanding, both logical and practical, the vitality of his convictions, the directness of his method, the fierceness of his withering sarcasm, the fervour of his high intellectual movements, his boundless confidence in truth, his dauntless sense of right, his profound sympathy with his audience, the sublime completeness of the whole to the whole, the man to the occasion, the utterance to the subject,—it would be felt how justly, after a struggle of fifty years, and in comparison with a succession of men greatly distinguished in his own great art, he was held worthy to take rank with the greatest orators the world has produced. To sum up all, I do not hesitate to apply to him the words which the sublime character of HAMPDEN wrung from CLARENDON, ‘He was a man that durst always, at all risks, support the liberty and property of the country; a man above all others possessed of the most absolute spirit of popularity, and the most absolute faculties to govern; a man to whom all came to learn, and of whom it could not be discovered that he learned from any one.’”

HISTORY OF THE WILLIAMSBURGH CHURCH.—A Discourse, delivered on occasion of the One hundred and twentieth Anniversary of the Williamsburgh Church, July 4th, 1856; Kingstree, S. C. With Notes, and an Appendix, by Rev. JAMES A. WALLACE, Pastor of the Church. “There is a voice of years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds.”—*Ossian*. Salisbury, N. S.: Bell & James, Printers. 1856. 18mo. pp. 122.

In this Discourse, Mr. Wallace has made a very valuable contribution to the materials which are accumulating in reference to the history of our church. The subject is a worthy one, and worthily handled. The Township of Williamsburgh, in South Carolina, from which the church, and subsequently the district, took their names, was named after King William “of glorious memory,” and settled by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, in successive emigrations, principally in the years 1732 and 1734. One of their first cares was, to make provision for the maintenance of the Gospel. They obtained a tract of land for a glebe, in the royal grant of which “there is not only permission to enjoy the faith and worship of the Presbyterian Church, but a positive proviso and limitation that the minister occupying the premises, and ministering there, shall profess, teach, and use the doctrine, discipline, and worship, now used in the Church of Scotland, and subscribing the Westminster Confession of Faith, as his confession.” After an ineffectual application to the Rev. John Willison, of Scotland, best known by his excellent exposition of the Shorter Catechism, they obtained, as their first minister, the Rev. Ro-

bert Heron, from Ireland, by whom the church was organized, in August, 1736. This church has sent forth from time to time colonies forming the churches of Indiantown, Salem, Mount Zion, Hopewell, Brewington, and Zion, in Maury County, Tennessee.

The active part taken by the people of Williamsburgh in the war of Independence, adds interest to their history. Major Jones, whose memorable rencontre with Ardeisof is familiar to every schoolboy, was a ruling elder of the church. Of the entire population, but one individual was a tory, and he was a stranger.

The annals of this church derive interest from a fact of which probably Mr. Wallace was not informed. Of it, the late Rev. Thomas D. Baird was a member, at the time when he devoted himself to the ministry. His first wife and two sons, all swept off within fifteen days, lie in the graveyard at Kingstree. During a protracted illness, which immediately afterwards prostrated himself, he received attention from the Jameses, Witherspoons, Dr. Dollard, and others, which endeared them to him while his life continued. Here, under the counsel of Dr. Stephenson and Dr. Flinn, he devoted himself to the ministry, for which he prepared under the direction of the venerable Waddell, then of Willington, and afterwards President of Athens College, Georgia.

We have been gratified in the perusal of Mr. Wallace's discourse, and trust that his example will be imitated by others. In no other way can the history of our Church be secured and transmitted to our posterity.

THE POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. Selected and edited by the Rev. ROBERT ARIS WILLIOTT, Incumbent of Bearwood. With English and American additions, arranged by EVERT A. DUYCKINCK, Editor of the Cyclopadia of American Literature. New York, 1858: Harper & Brothers. Small 4to. pp. 616.

THIS is unquestionably one of the most splendid books that has issued from the American press. The external drapery is befitting the lofty, pure, and elegant diction of the poets of the 19th century. The American edition is superior to the London one, in being enriched with more copious selections from the poets of Great Britain, with large additions from those of America. The volume is in all respects a standard volume. It is in itself a little library of poetry, worth more than many a large one in a splendid oak case. Such a book has a refining influence on the mind. At this gift season of the year, we know of no better present for a friend. The paper and printing are the finest specimens of the Harpers, and the binding is of the rich gift order.

TRAVELS AND DISCOVERIES IN NORTH CENTRAL AFRICA. Being the Journal of an Expedition undertaken under the auspices of her Britannic Majesty's Government, in the years 1849-56. By HENRY BARTH, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and Asiatic Societies, &c. In three volumes. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Brothers, publishers, Franklin Square: 1857.

THE second volume of Dr. Barth's Travels in Africa possesses as much interest as the first, and indeed more. We shall notice the work more particularly in a future number.

DARKNESS IN THE FLOWERY LAND; or, Religious Notions and Popular Superstitions in North China. By the Rev. M. SIMPSON CULBERTSON, of the Shanghai Mission, of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. New York: 1857. Charles Scribner, publisher: 12mo. pp. 235.

OUR missionaries do an excellent service by their publications. As intelligent men, they are commonly capable of putting forth works valuable in literature; and as Christians and missionaries, they are competent to judge of the principles, condition, and forms of heathenism. Our brother Culbertson has written an interesting and important volume, giving much information on the state of religion in North China. At the present crisis of affairs abroad, the publication of this work should attract general attention.

MESSIAH'S REIGN: or, The Future Blessedness of the Church and the World. By the Rev. WILLIAM RAMSEY, D.D.: Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, publisher, No. 111 South Tenth Street, below Chestnut. 1857.

DR. RAMSEY'S volume on the Messiah's Reign discusses, with much ability, the various topics belonging to the Millenarian controversy. We expressed our views at large, in one of the early volumes of this Magazine, against the principles propounded by Dr. Ramsey, and do not feel called upon to enter into any further discussion at present. A work written by a minister so venerated, will be duly appreciated.

The Religious World.

THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

THE Board of Managers of this Institution have held several meetings to decide upon the proper course to be adopted, in regard to the new standard edition of the Bible. The Revisionists have done the principal part of the talking, but they have been ably met by conservative men. The subject has been referred to a new Committee, consisting of the following persons: *R. S. Storrs, Jr., D.D.*, of Brooklyn; *H. A. Boardman, D.D.*, of Philadelphia; *Thomas DeWitt, D.D.*; *Bishop Jones*; *William Adams, D.D.*, and *G. T. Bedell, D.D.*, of New York; *Hon. John McLean*, of Ohio; *James Lenox, Esq.*, and *Charles Tracy*, of New York. We hope the American Bible Society will go back, without compromise, to the **OLD TEXT AND ACCESSORIES**. Any other course is unconstitutional and perilous.

THE SEMINARY OF THE NORTHWEST.

THE prospects of this Institution are now darker than ever, but probably on the principle that the darkest hour is just before the dawn.

The letters of DR. MACMASTER, which have been published in Dr. Rice's pamphlet, will destroy his influence and usefulness in the Presbyterian Church. Indeed, we do not see how any minister in our body could write such letters, or writing them, desire to continue in our connection. They disclose so much bitterness of feeling on the subject of slavery, and such a want of confidence in his brethren, that no Seminary can be expected to prosper under the professorship and guidance of one who can make such revelations. Mr. C. A. SPRING was fully justified in exposing these epistles to the friends of the Seminary, and their publication is now made with Dr. MacMaster's consent. We write these things with great pain. Our relations with Dr. MacMaster have been amicable, but this does not prevent us from speaking our real sentiments on public questions. The controversy between Synodical and Assembly superintendence has been, to a considerable extent, a personal one. These letters, we presume, virtually decide the question in favour of a transfer of the Seminary to the General Assembly.

A CONVENTION OF SYNODS.

ACCORDING to agreement, a Convention of the Synods of Pittsburg, Ohio, Wheeling, and Alleghany, met at Pittsburg, on the 2d of December, 1857. About 300 ministers and 1000 ruling elders were present. The venerable Dr. HOGE presided. The object of the Convention was the promotion of religion. All its exercises were solemn and to edification. It was in session during parts of three days. The brethren felt that it was good to be there. An earnest Pastoral Letter was sent out to the churches, on the subject of labouring and praying for a *revival of religion*. The following measures were recommended to the churches within the bounds of the four Synods.

1st. That the letter be read before the congregation on the first Sabbath after the reception of it, by the minister or elders.

2d. That a special meeting of each Session be held at the earliest convenient period, to take these topics into prayerful consideration.

3d. That a general pastoral visitation be carried out as promptly as possible, in which all the elders shall co-operate with the pastor, going two and two from house to house.

4th. That the pastors preach during this month, on topics immediately bearing upon the great subject of the revival of God's work.

5th. That especially on the first Sabbath in January, all the pastors preach, if possible, on the practical aspects of this subject.

6th. That the first Thursday in January, be observed throughout the bounds of these Synods, as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, for the reviving of God's work among us speedily.

Resolved, That the concurrence and co-operation of any ministers, churches, or synods, in the views and action commended in the foregoing paper, will greatly encourage the hearts, and strengthen the hands of the ministers and elders composing this Convention.

THE BRITISH WESLEYAN CONFERENCE.

We give the following important table from the recently published Wesleyan Minutes :

1. British Conference :	Members.	On Trial.	Ministers.	On Trial.	Superannu'ds.
Great Britain,	270,095	17,893	1,107	83	188
Ireland,	19,287	No returns	86	18	21
Missionaries,			27	—	5
Foreign Missions,	64,775	3,469	297	65	10
				7	
2. French Conference,	1,130	159	16	—	—
3. Australasian Conference,	21,247	2,585	83	52	7
4. Canada Conference,	37,596	4,196	203	112	36
5. British Am. Eastern Conf.	12,730	825	70	26	6
Total,	426,860	29,127	1,889	363	273

EPISCOPAL STATISTICS.

THE comparative views of the chief items given in the Journal of the General Convention of 1856, supply us with some interesting and important facts. For example, taking the period of eighteen years from 1838 to 1856. In 1838, *clergy* in 25 dioceses, 951. In 1856, *clergy* in 31 dioceses, 1828. In 1838, *baptisms* in 12 dioceses : adults, 2522 ; infants, 14,964 ; not specified in 2 dioceses, 1272. Total, 18,758. In 1856, baptisms in 26 dioceses : adults, 9542 ; infants, 56,132 ; not specified in 4 dioceses, 4853. Total, 70,527. In 1838, *communicants* in 23 dioceses, 45,930. In 1856, communicants in 31 dioceses, 119,540. In 1838, *Sunday-school teachers* in 9 dioceses, 4367. In 1856, Sunday-school teachers in 20 dioceses, 9235. In 1838, *Sunday-scholars* in 13 dioceses, 39,443. In 1856, Sunday-scholars in 25 dioceses, 82,014.

In examining the List of Clergy, in Appendix M, we find a total of 1843. Of this number, as near as we can gather, 85 are engaged in the work of professors of colleges and teachers of academies and schools, and 206 besides are recorded as without parishes, making 291, or something more than one-sixth of the whole. This number must, however, have been reduced since the lists were drawn up ; still we fear it will be found an ugly feature in our statistics.—*Protestant Churchman*.

OFFERINGS FROM PINE RIDGE, MISSISSIPPI.

THE present very severe pressure in the Board of Education has created much anxiety among its officers, the students, and Christian friends of the cause. About \$12,000 are needed, in order to pay the obligations that will be due on February 1st. The prevailing feeling in the Board

has been one of *anxiety*, mingled with *faith* and *hope*. Whilst much is to be done to relieve the wants of the students, and to meet the next appropriations due to them, there is no reason to distrust Providence, and to despond. As an evidence that there is good ground for the hope that God will cause the necessary funds to be poured into the treasury of the Board, we are permitted to state that the sum of *eleven hundred dollars* has just been received from the Presbyterian Church of Pine Ridge, Mississippi, through the hands of S. H. Lamdin, Esq. This large amount, far exceeding any previous contributions, although they have been always liberal, shows what Christian liberality can accomplish in a day of exigency.

Let each church do *something*, and the *best* it can, and all our difficulties will be graciously overruled for good. God will accomplish great things for his Church. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Of all the adornments of the Christian sanctuary, her ministers, clothed with salvation, are the greatest. Let the precious youth, who are in training for the sacred office, be encouraged in the name of their Lord!

OAKLAND COLLEGE, MISSISSIPPI.

THE Catalogue of this Institution for 1857-58 shows, that there are in attendance one hundred students: Seniors, 11; Juniors, 12; Sophomores, 9; Freshmen, 18; Preparatory Department, 50; — 100.

The following gentlemen compose the FACULTY:

REV. JAMES PURVIANCE, D.D., President, and Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, etc.

REV. J. E. C. DOREMUS, A.M., Professor of the Greek and Latin Languages and Literature.

REV. W. D. MOORE, A.M., Professor of Natural Science.

ROBERT PATTERSON, A.M., Professor of Mathematics.

F. M. STEVENS, A.M., Principal of the Preparatory Department.

PROF. R. PATTERSON, Librarian.

PROF. W. D. MOORE, Secretary of the Faculty.

PROF. J. E. C. DOREMUS, Treasurer of the Faculty.

CONGREGATIONALISM.

RECENT discussions in regard to the inefficiency of the Congregational system, have led us to examine the official minutes or reports of several of the New England bodies, and the results, we confess, surprise us. From the Minutes of the General Association of Connecticut, from 1850 to 1857, inclusive, we have the following facts and figures. The first column gives the years; the second, the total reported additions to the churches of the State by profession of faith; the third, the total removals by dismissal, death, and excommunication; and the fourth, the difference between the last two, which, in every case, is a decrease.

Years.	Additions by profession.	Removals.	Actual decrease.
1850,	967	1433	466
1851,	1117	1241	124
1852,	1243	1709	466
1853,	1375	1678	303
1854,	758	1820	1062
1855,	1260	1683	423
1856,	1318	1638	320
1857,	939	1514	575

The result shown is, that the total additions, by profession, to all the Congregational churches of Connecticut, for the last eight years, are 8977; total removals, 12,716; total decrease, 3739, or more than 467 a year! And what is remarkable, there is *not one of all the eight years* which does not show a *decrease*. And all the reported increase of these churches, for the eight years, has been by certificate, and not by profession, which is no gain, within the State, from the world to the Church!

But what is still more surprising, the whole number of church members reported in 1849, was 41,070; and the whole number in 1857 only 37,929, or an actual decrease, for the eight years, of 3041, and this, notwithstanding the fact, that within that time 6006 had been added by letter: thus seeming to show a decrease, so far as additions, by profession, are concerned, of 9647, or no less than 1205 per year for the eight years! And further still, the baptisms of children, reported for every one of these years, averages less than three to each church in the State!

Now, we would respectfully ask, is this the efficiency of Congregationalism? And are the churches or ministers of Connecticut aware of these facts? If so, what is the explanation? We pause for a reply; merely adding, that hereafter we may give the facts as to other New England States.—*Presbyterian*.

The Gleaner.

PROPHECIES RESPECTING ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT.

1. The world will not come to an end this year.—Some are always predicting that this grand consummation is coming on. But we may rest assured, from the Bible, that that event is still a great way off. “The Gospel must first be preached among all nations.”

2. Satan will be steadily at work this year.—He is an enemy never tired of hurling his hellish darts. And, as his time for action draws to an end, he manifests the more ingenuity and malignity in executing his schemes. Heretical preachers, intoxicating drinks, corrupt literature, wicked companionship, and depraved customs, will be only some among the murderous tools he will ply for the destruction of souls.

3. The habit of procrastination will be fatally indulged by sinners this year.—If one habit is more easily yielded to than another, this is that one. Those who slide into the habit of postponing repentance, will

hardly cease to slide upon the downward road, until they reach the depths of perdition. And, therefore, I say the impenitent, who, through past time, have been waiting for "a more convenient season," to become reconciled to God, will continue still to wait. Indecision in one instance, will induce it in another.

4. There will be false members admitted to the Church this year.—That is the result of two causes in combination: the treachery of the heart, and the incompetency of the best men as judges of it. The fact, as to the existence of spurious conversions, false hopes, and unworthy communicants, has, accordingly, always existed, and, we have reason to fear, always will exist. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." "Many will say to me, in that day, Lord! Lord!—and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you."

5. There will be bitter disappointments this year.—Hope is ever active, and the imagination fruitful. We draw fancy sketches and indulge high-wrought expectations, which can never be realized, and hence a painful reaction ensues; there is left an aching void. We find not what we looked for from marriage, from the markets, from the crops, from travel, from wealth, from society, from learning, or promotion.

6. There will be an advance towards the millennium this year.—That event is a fixed fact, in the future: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And, looking with the eye of faith at the enterprises of men, in the various departments of art and science, we can see, that in the hands of the Almighty, they are conspiring to that great and blessed result. And as the twelve revolving months of 1858 shall successively roll by, they will, each, contribute something towards bringing it forward. The Gospel, faithfully brought in contact with the heart, shall be attended with its legitimate measure of success; and, though there be opposition and persecution, yet will it turn out to the furtherance of Christianity.

7. There will be with those who see its end, many sorrowful regrets this year.—It is hard for us to learn wisdom. We have a lesson here and a lesson there from God's Word and Providence. We have warning on this side and warning on that side from conscience and experience. Yet, with a species of downright frenzy, we adopt the forbidden path; we do what we, at the time, know we shall be sorry for doing; we neglect the closet; we squander time; we waste money; we rush into crimes which must be ruinous. "At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

8. Death will gather many victims this year.—The old and young shall be called hence; the rich and the poor shall be carried to the house appointed for all the living. Pastor and people shall, each, in turn, pay this debt. The righteous shall be gathered to their rest, "like as a shock of corn cometh in his season;" while, upon the wicked engrossed with worldly schemes and speculations, the summons shall most unexpectedly fall, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Many, many, of every class, with this, shall see their last year. Perhaps some of the readers of these admonitory lines may be thus doomed. The writer would remember that he himself is equally liable. May we all be always ready.—*Extract.*

THE NEW YEAR.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

THE wave is breaking on the shore,—
 The echo fading from the chime,—
 Again the shadow moveth o'er
 The dial-plate of time!

Oh, seer-seen Angel! waiting now
 With weary feet on sea and shore,
 Impatient for the last dread vow
 That time shall be no more!

Once more across thy sleepless eye
 The semblance of a smile has passed;
 The year departing leaves more nigh
 Time's fearfullest and last.

Oh! in that dying year hath been
 The sum of all since time began,—
 The birth and death, the joy and pain,
 Of Nature and of Man.

TWELVE WAYS OF SHORTENING LIFE.

1. WEARING of thin shoes and cotton stockings on damp nights, and in cool rainy weather. Wearing insufficient clothing, and especially upon the limbs and extremities.

2. Leading a life of enfeebling, stupid laziness, and keeping the mind in an unfavourable state of excitement by reading trashy novels. Going to theatres, parties and balls, in all sorts of weather, in the thinnest possible dress. Dancing till in a complete perspiration, and then going home without sufficient over-garments through the cool, damp air.

3. Sleeping on feather beds in seven by nine rooms, without ventilation at the top or the windows, and especially with two or more persons in the same unventilated bedroom.

4. Surfeiting on hot and very stimulating dinners. Eating in a hurry, without half masticating your food, and eating heartily before going to bed every night, when the mind and body are exhausted by the toils of the day, and the excitement of the evening.

5. Beginning in childhood on tea and coffee, and going from one step to another, through chewing and smoking tobacco, and drinking intoxicating liquors, by personal abuse, and physical and mental excesses of every description.

6. Marrying in haste, and getting an uncongenial companion, and living the remainder of life in mental dissatisfaction. Cultivating jealousies and domestic broils, and being always in a mental ferment.

7. Keeping children quiet by giving paregoric and cordials; by teaching them to suck candy, and by supplying them with raisins, nuts, and rich cake. When they are sick, by giving them mercury, tartar-emetic,

and arsenic, under the mistaken notion that they are medicines, and not irritant poisons.

8. Allowing the love of gain to absorb our minds, so as to leave no time to attend to our health. Following an unhealthy occupation because money can be made by it.

9. Tempting the appetite with bitters and niceties when the stomach says no, and by forcing food when nature does not demand, and even rejects it. Gormandizing between meals.

10. Contriving to keep in a continual hurry about something or nothing. Giving way to fits of anger.

11. Being irregular in all our habits of sleeping and eating; going to bed at midnight, and getting up at noon. Eating too much and too many kinds of food, and that which is too highly seasoned.

12. Neglecting to take proper care of ourselves, and not applying early for medical advice when disease first appears. Taking celebrated quack medicines to a degree of making a drug shop of the body.

The above causes produce more sickness, suffering, and death, than all the epidemics, malaria, and contagion, combined with war, pestilence, and famine. Nearly all who have attained to old age, have been remarkable for equanimity of temper, correct habits of diet, drink, and rest—for temperance, cheerfulness, morality. Physical punishment is sure to visit the transgressor of nature's laws. All virtually commit suicide and cut off many years of their natural life, who do not observe the means for preventing disease and of preserving health.

A SCRIPTURAL SUM.

CHRISTIAN readers, here is a sum in addition for you to work out. It will require diligence and care, and admit of no wasted time :

Add to your faith virtue ;
 And to virtue, knowledge ;
 And to knowledge, temperance ;
 And to temperance, patience ;
 And to patience, godliness ;
 And to godliness, brotherly kindness ;
 And to brotherly kindness, charity.

The Answer.—For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 Peter, 1 : 5-8.—*Christian Index.*

