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REASON AND FAITH,

AND

OTHER MISCELLANIES

OF

HENRY ROGERS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH."

THE SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SAN ANSELMO
MARIN CO
CALIF.

BOSTON:
CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK:
CHARLES S. FRANCIS AND COMPANY.
1853.

CAMBRIDGE: METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

R 3 n
1853

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LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THOMAS FULLER.*

The republication, within the last few years, of all the principal works of this singular author, affords us an opportunity, by no means unwelcome, of canvassing his merits, and assigning him his proper niche in the temple of our literature. Nor is it necessary, we are sure, to make any apology for dedicating a few of our pages to such a subject. He cannot be unworthy of attention, who was a favorite author of Coleridge and Lamb, and of whom the former (certainly in a moment of unreflecting enthusiasm) could write thus: "Next to Shakspeare, I am not certain whether Thomas Fuller, beyond all other writers, does not excite in me the sense and emotion of the marvellous; — the degree in which any given faculty, or combination of faculties, is possessed and manifested, so far surpassing what one would have thought possible in a single mind, as to give one's admiration the flavor and quality of wonder." Let this statement of a critic, the soundness of whose judgments, though they are generally correct, and often admirable, cannot always be relied upon, require what abatement it may, it may be safely said, that there is scarcely any writer, whose intellectual character will better repay an attempt at analysis than that of Fuller.

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* "Edinburgh Review," January, 1842.

1. *The Church History of Britain.* By Thomas Fuller, D. D. New Edition. 3 vols. 8vo. London. 1831.

2. *The Worthies of England.* By Thomas Fuller, D. D. New Edition. 3 vols. 8vo London. 1840.

3. *The History of the Holy War.* By Thomas Fuller, D. D. New Edition. 12mo London. 1840.

4. *The Holy State and the Profane State.* By Thomas Fuller, D. D. New Edition. 8vo. London. 1841

5. *Good Thoughts in Bad Times, and Good Thoughts in Worse Times.* By Thomas Fuller, D. D. New Edition. 12mo. London. 1840

We set about our task the more willingly, as we believe it to be an act of bare justice. We are convinced that posterity has dealt hardly by his memory, and that there are hundreds who have been better remembered with far less claims to that honor. Thus, it is singular that even Mr. Hallam, in his recent "History of European Literature," should not have bestowed upon him any special notice; dismissing him with only a slight allusion, in a note upon another subject.* Yet Fuller was not only one of the most voluminous, — an equivocal indication of merit, it must be allowed, — but one of the most original writers of our language. If he had merely resembled those of his dull contemporaries, who wrote apparently for writing's sake, — without genius or fancy, without any of those graces of thought or diction, which have a special claim on the historian of literature; — if his folios had been collections of third-rate sermons or heavy commentaries; of commonplace spread out to the last degree of tenuity, scarcely tolerable even in the briefest form in which truisms can be addressed to our impatience, and perfectly insupportable when prolonged into folios, — there would be sufficient reason for the critic's neglect. But it is far otherwise: though Fuller's works, like those of many of his contemporaries, are sometimes covered with rubbish, and swollen with redundances, they are, as is the case also with some of them, instinct with genius. Like Taylor, and Barrow, and Sir Thomas Brown, he wrote with a vigor and originality, with a fertility of thought and imagery, and a general felicity of style, which, considering the quantity of his compositions, and the haste with which he produced them, impress us with wonder at his untiring activity and preternatural fecundity. He has scattered with careless prodigality, over the pages of his many works, thoughts and images which, if collected, properly disposed, and purified from the worthless matter which incrusts, and often buries them, would have insured him a place beside those who, by writing less and elaborating it more, by concentrating their strength on works of moderate compass and high finish, have secured themselves a place, not only in the libraries, but in the memories, of their readers; and are not simply honored with an occasional reference, but live in perpetual and familiar quotation.

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* Hallam, Vol. III. p. 104. It must not be supposed that any serious censure of Mr. Hallam's great work is here intended. If it be singular that Fuller has been so summarily dealt with, it would have been far more singular had there been *no* important omissions. The real wonder is, that the author should have been able at all to dispose of subjects, so immense and so multifarious, in so moderate a compass; to *daguerreotype* so boundless a landscape, on so small a surface, with such fidelity and distinctness.

Before proceeding further with the analysis of Fuller's intellectual character, it may be advisable to give a rapid sketch of the principal events of his life.

He was born in 1608, at Aldwincle, in Northamptonshire; his father was the Rev. T. Fuller, rector of St. Peter's in that village. His early education seems to have been conducted chiefly under the paternal roof, and that so successfully, that at twelve years of age he was sent to Queen's College, Cambridge; the master of which was his maternal uncle, Dr. Davenant, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. In 1624–5, he took his degree of B. A., and that of M. A. in 1628. He then removed to Sidney College, and, after a short interval, was chosen minister of St. Bennett's, Cambridge, where his great talents as a preacher soon rendered him extremely popular. Preferment now came rapidly. In 1631, he was chosen fellow of Sidney College, and made a prebendary of Salisbury. The same year was signalized by his maiden publication. Like many other men of powerful imagination, who have eventually distinguished themselves as prose-writers, he had in early life toyed a little with the Muses. His first work was poetical, and we may be sure that it was steeped in the quaintness which was equally characteristic of the age and of the individual. The very title, indeed, smacks of that love of alliteration of which his writings are so full. It was entitled "David's Heinous Sin, Hearty Repentance, and Heavy Punishment." It is now extremely scarce. Peace to its ashes! its author's prose writings have a better and a surer claim to remembrance.

Soon after entering priests' orders, he was presented to the rectory of Broad Winsor, in Dorsetshire. In 1635, he repaired again to Cambridge, to take his degree of Bachelor of Divinity; and, on his return to Broad Winsor, got rid of another kind of bachelorship in a happy marriage. This event took place in 1638; but his felicity was not of long continuance. After giving birth to one son, his wife died, about the year 1641. In the quietude of Broad Winsor "he began to complete," to use a curious phrase of one of his biographers, "several works he had planned at Cambridge"; but, getting sick of solitude, and impatient to know something more of public affairs, he repaired to London, where his pulpit talents soon obtained him an invitation to the lectureship of the Savoy. In 1640 he published his deservedly celebrated "History of the Holy War," which gained him some money and more reputation. He was a member of the Convocation which assembled at Westminster in 1640, and has left us a minute account of its proceedings in his "Church History." In 1642 he preached at Westminster Abbey, on the anniversary of the king's inauguration; and the sermon contained some dangerous allusions to the state of public affairs. His text was characteristic: — "Yea, let him take all, so that my lord the king return in peace." The sermon, when printed, gave great umbrage to the Parliamentary party, and involved the preacher in no little odium. In this year he published his best and most popular work, entitled "The Holy and Profane State." Refusing to take an oath to the Parliament, except with certain reservations, Fuller now left London, and repaired to the king at Oxford, by whom he was well received. The king was anxious to hear him preach. Fuller complied; but, strange to say, he managed to displease the royalists as much as he had before displeased the patriots. His ill-success on both occasions may be taken as an argument of his sincerity and moderation, whatever may be thought of his worldly wisdom.

During his stay at Oxford he resided at Lincoln College; but he was not long to escape the cup which, in those sad times, came round to all parties. Sequestration was pronounced against him, and was embittered by the loss of all his books and manuscripts. This misfortune was partly repaired by the generosity of Henry Lord Beauchamp and Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, — the latter of whom bestowed upon him the remains of his father's library. In order to obviate the suspicion of indifference to the king's cause, he now sought and obtained, from Sir Ralph Hopton, a chaplaincy in the royal army; and employed his leisure, while rambling through the country, in collecting materials for his future work, "The Worthies of England." It appears that, in his capacity of chaplain, he could, on occasion, beat "drum ecclesiastic" as well as any of the preachers in Cromwell's army; for we are told, that, when a party of the royalists were besieged at Basinghouse, Fuller animated the garrison to so vigorous a defence, that Sir William Waller was compelled to abandon the siege. When the royal forces were driven into Cornwall, Fuller, taking refuge in Exeter, resumed his studies, and preached regularly to the citizens. During his stay here, he was appointed chaplain to the Princess Henrietta Maria (then an infant), and was presented to the living of Dorchester. He was present at the siege of Exeter, in the course of which an incident occurred, so curious in itself, and narrated by Fuller (who vouches for the truth of his statement) in so characteristic a style, that no apology is necessary for inserting his account of it here; leaving the reader to philosophize upon it in any way that may seem to him most proper. The extract is from "The Worthies of England": — "When the city of Exeter was besieged by the Parliamentary forces, so that only the south side thereof, towards the sea, was open unto it, incredible numbers of larks were found in that open quarter, for multitude like *quails* in the *wildernesse*, though (blessed be God!) unlike them both in *cause* and *effect*, as not desired with man's destruction, nor sent with God's anger, as appeared by their safe digestion into wholesome nourishment: hereof I was an *eye* and a *mouth* witnesse. I will save my credit in not conjecturing any number, knowing that herein, though I should *stoop* beneath the *truth*, I should *mount* above *belief*. They were as fat as plentiful; so that, being sold for twopence a dozen and under, the poor, who could have no *cheaper*, as the rich no *better meat*, used to make pottage of them, boyling them down therein. Several natural causes were assigned hereof . . . . . However, the *cause of causes* was *Divine Providence*."

After the taking of Exeter, Fuller once more repaired to London, where he obtained the lectureship at St. Clement's, Lombard Street, and subsequently that of St. Bride's, Fleet Street. He does not appear to have long discharged the functions of either, "having been forbidden," to use his own language, "till further order, the exercise of his public preaching" Silenced though he was, however, this did not prevent his being presented, in 1648, to the living of Waltham. For this he was indebted to the Earl of Carlisle, to whom he had become chaplain. To men of less activity of mind, and less zealous to do good, compulsory silence might have been no unacceptable concomitant of a rich living; but not to Fuller. This year and the following he spent chiefly in the preparation of one of the quaintest of all his writings, — his "Pisgah-sight of Palestine and the Confines thereof, with the History of the Old and New Testaments acted thereon." The work was illustrated by several curious engravings, in which the artists seem to have vied in quaintness with the author, and which are as characteristic of the spirit of the age as the letter-press which accompanied them. In the two or three following years he published several tracts and sermons, which have long since passed into oblivion. In 1654 he married again, and into a noble family; his wife being the sister of Viscount Baltinglass. In 1655, as Mr. Chalmers tells us, he persisted in the discharge of his ministerial functions, "notwithstanding Cromwell's prohibition of all persons from preaching or teaching schools, who had been adherents of the late king." We shall not stop to inquire whether the biographer has been altogether just to Cromwell, in omitting to state that the ordinance in question was immediately modified, on Archbishop Usher's representation of its hardship, and its application limited to such clergymen as had been *political* offenders. It is more to our purpose to observe, that we may account for Fuller's continuing to preach, without either accusing him of rash zeal, or praising him for conscientious resistance; inasmuch as he was duly authorized so to do by the Court of "Triers," before whom he had been examined. Calamy has given us a droll account of Fuller's perplexities when summoned to this ordeal. He doubtless had some misgivings as to whether he might be able to answer satisfactorily all the inquisitorial inquiries of this strange court; and whether he might not get *limed* by some of their theological subtilties. In this dilemma, he applied to the celebrated John Howe (then one of Cromwell's chaplains), whose catholic spirit ever prompted him to exert whatever influence he possessed in behalf of the good men of all parties. "You may observe, Sir," said Fuller to him, "that I am a somewhat corpulent man, and I am to go through a very *strait* passage. I beg you would be so good as to give me a shove, and help me through." Howe gave him the best advice in his power. When the "Triers" inquired, "whether he had ever had any experience of a work of grace in his heart?" Fuller replied, in terms of cautious generality, that "he could appeal to the Searcher of all hearts, that he made a conscience of his very thoughts"; — implying, doubtless, that it was not without the most diligent investigation of his motives, that he had ventured on the sacred office. With this answer they were satisfied, and it was, perhaps, well for Fuller that it was not more specific.

In 1656, he published his "Church History of Great Britain," to which was appended "The History of the University of Cambridge," and "The History of Waltham Abbey." His "Church History" called forth some animadversions from Dr. Heylyn, to which Fuller replied. In 1658, Lord Berkeley, one of his many patrons, made him his chaplain, and presented him to the rectory of Cranford in Middlesex. Just before the Restoration, he was reinstated in his lectureship in the Savoy, as also in his prebend at Salisbury; and, shortly after that event, was appointed chaplain extraordinary to the king, and created Doctor of Divinity by *mandamus*. He was within sight of a bishopric, when death brought all his earthly prospects to a close in 1661. He was buried in his church at Cranford, in the chancel of which there is a monument to his memory. The Latin inscription, which has the rare merit of telling but little more than the truth, closes with an antithetical conceit, so much in Fuller's vein, that it would have done his heart good, could he but have read the following sentence: — "Hic jacet Thomas Fuller . . . . . Qui dum viros Angliæ illustres opere posthumo immortalitate consecrare meditatus est, ipse immortalitatem est consecutus." This alludes to "The Worthies of England," partly printed before his death, but published by his son.

Fuller is one of the few voluminous authors who are never tedious. No matter where we pitch, we are sure to alight on something which stimulates attention; and perhaps there is no author equally voluminous, to whom we could so fearlessly apply the *ad aperturam libri* test. Let the subject be ever so dry or barren, he is sure to surround it with some unlooked-for felicity, or at least some entertaining oddity of thought or expression: the most meagre matter of fact shall suggest either some solid reflection or curious inference, some ingenious allusion or humorous story; or, if nothing better, some sportive alliteration or ludicrous pun. To this must be added, that his reflections and his images are in general so exceedingly novel, (often, it is true, far-fetched and quaint enough, but often also very beautiful,) that they surprise as well as please; and please in a great measure by surprising us. Probably there is no author who so often breaks upon his readers with turns of thought for which they are totally unprepared; nor would it be unamusing to watch the countenance of any intelligent man while perusing his pages. We will venture to say, that few other writers in the English language could produce more rapid variations of expression. We should see the face, in succession, mantling with a smile, — distended into a broad grin, — breaking out into loud laughter; the eyebrows now arched to an expression of sudden wonder and pleased surprise; the whole visage now clouded with a momentary shade of vexation over some wanton spoiling of a fine thought, now quieted again into placidity by the presentation of something truly wise or beautiful, and anon chuckling afresh over some outrageous pun or oddity. The same expression could not be maintained for any three paragraphs, — perfect gravity scarcely for three sentences.

The activity of Fuller's suggestive faculty must have been immense. Though his principal characteristic is wit, and that too so disproportionate, that it conceals in its ivy-like luxuriance the robust wisdom about which it coils itself, his illustrations are drawn from every source and quarter, and are ever ready at his bidding. In the variety, frequency, and novelty of his illustrations, he strongly resembles two of the most imaginative writers in our language, though in all other respects still more unlike them than they were unlike one another, — Jeremy Taylor and Edmund Burke. Each, indeed, has his peculiar characteristics, even in those very points in which they may be compared. The imagination of Jeremy Taylor takes its hue from his vast learning, and derives from classical and historical allusions more than half its sources of illustration; that of Fuller, from the wit which forms the prime element in his intellectual constitution. Burke, on the other hand, had little wit; at least it was no characteristic of his mind: the images his mind supplies are chiefly distinguished by splendor and beauty. Still, in a boundless profusion of imagery of one kind or another, available on all occasions and on all subjects, and capable of clothing sterility itself with sudden freshness and verdure, they all resemble one another, and are almost unequalled among English prose-writers. Most marvellous and enviable is that fecundity of fancy, which can adorn whatever it touches, — which can invest naked fact and dry reasoning with unlooked-for beauty, — make flowerets bloom even on the brow of the precipice, and, when nothing better can be had, can turn the very substance of rock itself into moss and lichens. This faculty is incomparably the most important for the vivid and attractive *exhibition* of truth to the minds of men; and, taken in connection with other qualities, which neither Taylor nor Fuller possessed, namely, method and taste, will do more to give books permanent power and popularity, than even the very truths they contain. Indeed, that, to a great extent, may be said of every discourse, which Fuller says more particularly of sermons, "that though reasons are the pillars of the fabric, similitudes are the windows which give the best lights."

We have said that Fuller's faculty of illustration is boundless; surely it may be safely asserted, since it can diffuse even over the driest geographical and chronological details an unwonted interest. We have a remarkable exemplification of this in those chapters of his "Holy War" in which he gives what he quaintly calls "a Pisgah-sight, or Short Survey of Palestine in general" ; and a still stronger, if possible, in his "Description of the Citie of Jerusalem." In these chapters, what in other hands would have proved little more than a bare enumeration of names, sparkles with perpetual wit, and is enlivened with all sorts of vivacious allusions. One or two short specimens of the arts by which he manages to make such a "survey" attractive, will be found below;* but much of the effect is lost by their being presented in a detached form.

The principal attribute of Fuller's genius is unquestionably wit; though, as Coleridge has well observed, "this very circumstance has defrauded him of his due praise for the practical wisdom of the thoughts, — for the beauty and variety of the truths into which he shaped the stuff." If it be inquired what was the character of his wit, it must be replied, it is so various, and assumes so many different shapes, that one might as well attempt to define wit itself; and this, seeing the comprehensive Barrow has contented himself with an enumeration of its forms, in despair of being able to include them all within the circle of a precise definition, we certainly shall not at present attempt. Suffice it to say, that all the varieties recorded in that singularly felicitous passage are exemplified in the pages of our author. Of *his* wit, as of *wit* in general, it may be truly said, that "sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale; sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound; sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression; sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude; sometimes it is lodged in a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection; sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense; sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture, passeth for it; sometimes an affected simplicity; sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being; sometimes it riseth only from a lucky hitting upon what is strange; sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose. Often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable; being answerable to the numberless rovings of fancy, and windings of language."

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* "Nain, where our Saviour raised the widow's son, so that she was twice a mother, yet had but one child." "Mount Carmel, the Jewish Parnassus, where the prophets were so conversant." "Aphek, whose walls falling down, gave both death and gravestones (!) to 27,000 of Benhadad's soldiers." "Tyre, anciently the Royal Exchange of the world." "The River Kishon, the besom to sweep away Sisera's army." "Gilboa, the mountain that David cursed, that neither dew nor rain should fall on it; but of late, some English travellers climbing this mountain were well wetted, David not cursing it by a prophetical spirit, but in a poetical rapture." "Gilgal, where the manna ceased, the Israelites having till then been fellow-commoners with the angels." "Gibeon, whose inhabitants cozened Joshua with a pass of false-dated antiquity. Who could have thought that clouted shoes could have covered so much subtility?" "Gaza, the gates whereof Samson carried away; and being sent for to make sport in the house of Dagon, acted such a tragedy as plucked down the stage, slew himself and all the spectators." "Macphelah, where the patriarchs were buried, whose bodies took livery and seisin in behalf of their posterity, who were to possess the whole land." "Edrei, the city of Og, on whose giant-like proportions the rabbis have more giant-like lies." "Pisgah, where Moses viewed the land: hereabouts the angel buried him, and also buried the grave, lest it should occasion idolatry."

Of all the preceding varieties of wit, next to the "play with words and phrases," perhaps Fuller most delighted in "pat allusions to a known story"; "in seasonable application of a trivial saying"; "in a tart irony" and "an affected simplicity"; in the "odd similitude" and the "quirkish reason." In these he certainly excelled. We have noted some brief specimens, which we here give the reader. Speaking of the Jesuits he says: "Such is the charity of the

Jesuits, that they never owe any man any ill-will, — making present payment thereof." Of certain prurient canons in which virtue is in imminent danger of being tainted by impure descriptions of purity, he shrewdly remarks: "One may justly admire how these canonists, being pretended virgins, could arrive at the knowledge of the criticisms of all obscenity." Touching the miraculous coffin in which St. Audré was deposited, he slyly says: "Under the ruined walls of Grantchester or Cambridge, a coffin was found, with a cover correspondent, both of white marble, which did fit her body so exactly, as if (which one may believe was true) it was *made* for it." On Machiavel's saying, "that he who undertakes to write a history must be of no religion," he observes: "If so, Machiavel himself was the best qualified of any in his age to be a good historian." On the unusual conjunction of great learning and great wealth in the case of Selden, he remarks: "Mr. Selden had some coins of the Roman emperors, and a great many more of our English kings. After commenting on the old story of St. Dunstan's pinching the Devil's nose with the red-hot tongs, he absurdly cries out: "But away with all suspicions and queries. None need to doubt of the truth thereof, finding it in a sign painted in Fleet Street, near Temple Bar." The bare, bald style of the schoolman, he tells us, some have attributed to design, "lest any of the vermin of equivocation should hide themselves under the *nap* of their words." On excessive attention to fashion in dress, he says: "Had some of our gallants been with the Israelites in the wilderness, when for forty years their clothes waxed not old, they would have been vexed, though their clothes were whole, to have been so long in one fashion." Speaking of the melancholy forebodings which have sometimes haunted the death-bed of good men, he quaintly tells us, "that the Devil is most busy in the last day of his term, and a tenant to be *outed* cares not what mischief he does." Of unreasonable expectations he says, with characteristic love of quibbling: "Those who *expect* what in reason they *cannot* expect, *may* expect." He thus happily illustrates the aid which the memory derives from method: "One will carry twice more weight trussed and packed up in bundles, than when it lies untowardly flapping and hanging about his shoulders." The court jester he wittily and truly characterizes thus: "It is an office which none but he that hath wit *can* perform, and none but he that wants wit *will* perform." Of modest women, who nevertheless dress themselves in questionable attire, he says: "I must confess some honest women may go thus, but no whit the honester for going thus. That ship may have Castor and Pollux for the sign, which, notwithstanding, has St. Paul for the lading." He thus speaks of anger: "He that keepeth anger long in his bosom, giveth place to the Devil. And why should we make room for him who will crowd in too fast of himself? Heat of passion makes our souls to crack, and the Devil creeps in at the crannies." Of marriages between the young and the old, he shrewdly remarks: "They that marry ancient people, merely in expectation to bury them, hang themselves in hopes some one may come and cut the halter." Of the affectedly grave he tells us: "These sometimes not only cover their defects, but get praise. They do wisely to counterfeit a reservedness, and to keep their chests always locked, — not for fear any should steal treasure thence, but lest some should look in and see that there is nothing in them." After telling us that an undutiful child will be repaid in the same coin by his own children, he says: "One complained that never father had so undutiful a child as he had. 'Yes,' said the son, with more truth than grace, 'my grandfather had.'" By way of illustrating the superior efficacy of example, he says: "A father that whipt his son for swearing, and swore himself while he whipt him, did more harm by his example than good by his correction." Of the intellectual deficiencies in the very tall, he remarks, that "ofttimes such who are built four stories high, are observed to have little in their cockloft"; and of "naturals," that "their heads are sometimes so little, that there is no room for wit; sometimes so long, that there is no wit for so much room." And again: "Generally nature hangs out a sign of simplicity in the face of a fool, and there is enough in his countenance for a hue and cry to take him on suspicion. Yet some by their faces may pass current enough till they cry themselves down by their speaking, for men know the bell is cracked when they hear it tolled."

Of the "quirkish reason," mentioned as one of the species of wit in the above-recited passage of Barrow, the pages of our author are full. What can be more ridiculous than the reason he assigns, in his description of the "good wife," for the *order* of Paul's admonitions to husbands and wives in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians? "The Apostle first adviseth women to submit themselves to their husbands, and then counselleth men to love their wives. And sure it was fitting that women should first have their lesson given them, because it is hardest to be learned, and therefore they need have the more time to con it. For the same reason we first begin with the character of a good wife." Not less droll, or rather far more so, is the manner in which he subtilizes on the command, that we are not "to let the sun go down on our wrath." "Anger kept till the next morning, with manna, doth putrefy and corrupt; save that manna, corrupted not at all, (and anger most of all,) kept the next Sabbath. St. Paul saith, 'Let not the sun go down on your wrath,' to carry news to the antipodes in another world of thy revengeful nature. Yet let us take the Apostle's meaning rather than his words, with all possible speed to depose our passion; not understanding him so literally that we may take leave to be angry till sunset; then might our wrath lengthen with the days, and men in Greenland, where day lasts above a quarter of a year, have plentiful scope of revenge." * One more specimen of the "quirkish reason," and we will have done. Of memory he says: "Philosophers place it in the rear of the head; and it seems the mine of memory lies there, because there men naturally dig for it, *scratching it* when they are at a loss!"

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* On this passage Charles Lamb makes the following characteristic remarks: "This whimsical prevention of a consequence which no one would have thought of deducing, setting up an *absurdum* on purpose to hunt it down, — placing guards, as it were, at the very outposts of possi-

Of all the *forms* of wit, Fuller affects that of the satirist least. Though he can be caustic, and sometimes is so, he does not often indulge the propensity; and when he does, it is without bitterness; a sly irony, a good-humored gibe, which tickles, but does not sting, is all he ventures upon. Perhaps there is no mental quality whatever, which so much depends on the temperament and moral habitudes of the individual, as this of wit; so much so, indeed, that often they will wholly determine its character. We are inclined to think, that he who is master of any one species of wit, might make himself no mean proficient in all; whether it shall have the quality of waspish spleen, or grave banter, or broad and laughing humor, depends far more on moral than on intellectual causes. Imagine Fuller's wit in a man of melancholic temperament, querulous disposition, sickly health, morbid sensibility, or irritable vanity, — and we should have a satirist whose malignity would repel, still more than his wit would attract. The sallies of our author are enjoyed without any drawback, even when they are a little satirical; so innocent, so childlike, so free from malice, are they. His own temperament eminently favored the development of the more amiable qualities of wit: he was endowed with that happy buoyancy of spirit, which, next to religion itself, is the most precious possession of man; and which is second only to religion, in enabling us

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bility, — gravely giving out laws to insanity, and prescribing moral fences to distempered intellects, could never have entered into a head less entertainingly constructed than that of Fuller, or Sir Thomas Browne, the very air of whose style the conclusion of this passage most aptly imitates." Lamb has made a small selection from the racy sayings of Fuller, very few of which, however, are included in those we have here presented to the reader. In truth, they are so numerous, that they may be picked up in every page.

to bear with ease the trials and burdens of humanity. Both conspired to render him habitually light-hearted. With such a temperament, thus added to unfeigned piety and unfeigned benevolence; with a heart open to all innocent pleasures, and purged from the "leaven of malice and uncharitableness," it was as natural that he should be full of good-tempered mirth, as it is for the grasshopper to chirp, or the bee to hum, or the birds to warble, in the spring breeze and the bright sunshine. His very physiognomy was an index to his natural character. As described by his contemporaries, he had light flaxen hair, bright, blue, and laughing eyes, a frank and open visage. Such a face was a sort of guaranty, that the wit with which he was endowed could not be employed for any purpose inconsistent with constitutional good-nature. Accordingly, never was mirth more devoid of malice than his; unseasonable and in excess it doubtless often is, but this is all that can be charged upon it. His gibes are so pleasant, so tinctured by an overflowing *bonhommie*, that we doubt whether the very subjects of them could forbear laughing in sympathy, though at their own expense. Equally assured we are, that, as he never uttered a joke on another with any malice, so he was quite ready to laugh when any joke was uttered upon himself. Never dreaming of ill-will to his neighbor, and equally unsuspicious of any towards himself, it must have been a bitter joke indeed in which he could not join. It is rarely that a professed joker relishes wit when directed against himself; and the manner in which he receives it may usually be taken as an infallible indication of his temper. He well knows the difference between laughing at another, and being laughed at himself. Fuller was not one of that *irritabile genus*, who wonder that any should be offended at their innocent pleasantry; and yet can never find any pleasantry innocent but their own! There is a story told, which, though not true, *ought* to have been true, and which, if not denied by Fuller, would have been supposed to authenticate itself. It is said that he once "caught a Tartar" in a certain Mr. Sparrowhawk, of whom he asked, "What was the difference between an owl and a sparrowhawk?" The reply was, that "an owl was *fuller* in the head, and *fuller* in the face, and *fuller* all over!" We believe that, if the retort had been really uttered, it would have been received by the object of it, not with that curious expression of face so common on such occasions, in which constrained mirth struggles with mortified vanity, and simulated laughter vainly strives to cover real annoyance, but with a peal of hearty gratulation.*

As the temperament of Fuller was most cheerful, and a pledge for the innocence of his wit, so he jested by what may be called a necessity of his nature, — on all subjects, at all times, under all circumstances. Wit, in one or other of its multitudinous shapes, was the habitual attire of his thoughts and feelings. With the kindest heart in the world, he could not recite even a calamitous story without investing it with a tinge of the ludicrous. It would seem as if, in his case, a jest were the natural expression of all emotion; he is no more to be wondered at for mingling his condolence and his lamentations with merriment, than are other men for accompanying them with tears and sighs. An epitaph in his hand would have been a sort of epigram, not free from grotesque humor; and his ordinary pulpit discourses must, we are convinced, have often contained passages which severely tried the gravity of his audience. In confirmation of all we have said, we may remark, that he actually finds it impossible to suppress his vivacious pleasantry even in the most tragical parts of his "histories," and tells the most rueful tidings in so droll a manner as sets all sobriety at defiance. One or two odd specimens we cannot refrain from laying before the reader. He thus recounts a "lamentable accident" which befell a congregation of Catholics at Blackfriars: "The sermon began to incline to the middle, the day to the end thereof; when on the sudden the floor fell down whereon they were assembled. It gave no charitable warning groan beforehand, but cracked, broke, and fell, all in an instant. Many were killed, more bruised, all frighted. Sad sight, to behold the flesh and blood of different persons mingled together, *and the brains of one on the head of another!* One lacked a leg; another, an arm; a third, *whole and entire, wanting nothing but breath, stifled in the ruins.*" Was ever such a calamity so mirthfully related? But one of the most singular instances of the peculiarity in question is contained in his account of the capture and execution of the principal conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot. It is so characteristic, that no apology is required for inserting one or two extracts below.*

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* The story is, however, more than doubtful; it is expressly denied by Fuller himself, in his reply to Heylyn's "Examen Historicum." The circumstances which led to the denial are curious. Fuller, in his "Ecclesiastical History," had related of Laud, that having once demanded of a lady, who had lately become a proselyte to Popery, the reason of the change, he received for answer, that "she hated a crowd." Upon being further pressed to explain so dark a saying, she said, "Your Lordship and many others are making for Rome as fast as ye can, and therefore, to prevent a press, I went before you." This anecdote roused the indignation of Heylyn, who, by way of showing the impropriety of recording in print idle reports to the disadvantage of individuals, tells of a "retort" on Fuller, substantially the same with that related of Mr. Sparrowhawk, but disguised in a form, and attended with circumstances, which rob it of more than half its point, and make Fuller appear to greater disadvantage than that of having merely been discomfited by a happy repartee. Fuller thus replied: "*My* tale was *true* and *new*, never printed before; whereas his is *old* (made, it seems, on one of my name, printed before I was born) and *false*, never by man or woman retorted on me. I had rather my name should make many causelessly merry, than any justly sad; and, seeing it lieth equally open and obvious to praise and dispraise, I shall as little be elated when flattered — 'Fuller of wit and learning,' as dejected when flouted — 'Fuller of folly and ignorance.'"

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* "Meantime Catesby, Percy, Rookwood, both the Wrights, and Thomas Winter, were hovering about London, to attend the issue of the matter. Having sat so long abrood, and hatching nothing, they began to suspect all their eggs had proved addle. Yet, betwixt hope and fear, they and their servants post down into the country, through Warwick

So exuberant is Fuller's wit, that, as his very melancholy is mirthful, so his very wisdom wears motley. But it is wisdom notwithstanding; nor are there many authors, in whom

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and Worcester, into Staffordshire. Of traitors they turn felons, breaking up stables and stealing horses as they went. But many of their own men, by a far more lawful felony, stole away from their masters, leaving them to shift for themselves. The neighboring counties, and their own consciences, rise up against these riotous roisterers, as yet unknown for traitors. At last Sir Richard Walsh, high sheriff of Worcestershire, overtook them at Holbeck, in Staffordshire, at the house of Mr. Stephen Littleton; where, upon their resistance, the two Wrights were killed, Rookwood and Thomas Winter shrewdly wounded. As for Percy and Catesby, they fought desperately for their lives, as knowing no quarter but *quartering* would be given unto them; and, as if they scorned to turn their backs to any but themselves, setting back to back, they fought against all that assaulted them. Many swords were drawn upon them, but 'gunpowder' must do the deed, which discharged that bullet which despatched them both. Never were two bad men's deaths more generally lamented of all good men; only on this account, — that they lived no longer, to be forced to a further discovery of their secret associates. It must not be forgotten, how, some hours before their apprehension, as these plotters were drying dank gunpowder in an inn, a miller casually coming in (haply not heeding the black meal on the hearth), by careless casting on of a billet, fired the gunpowder: up flies the chimney with part of the house; all therein are frightened, most hurt; but especially Catesby and Rookwood had their faces soundly scorched, so bearing in their bodies, not στίγματα, 'the marks of Our Lord Jesus Christ,' but the print of their own impieties. Well might they guess how good that their cup of cruelty was, whose dregs they meant others should drink, by this little *sip* which they themselves had unwillingly tasted thereof. The rest were all at London solemnly arraigned, convicted, condemned. So foul the fact, so fair the proof, they could say nothing for themselves. Master Tresham dying in the prison, prevented a more ignominious end." . . . . . "They all craved testimony that they died Roman Catholics. My pen shall grant them this their last and so equal petition, and bears *witness to all whom it may concern, that they lived and died in the Romish religion.* And although the heinousness of their offence might, with some color of justice, have angered severity into cruelty against them, yet so favorably were they proceeded with, that most of their sons or heirs, except since disinherited by their own prodigality, at this day enjoy their paternal possessions."

we shall find so much solid sense and practical sagacity, in spite of the grotesque disguise in which they mask themselves. Nothing can be more true than the remark already quoted from Coleridge, that Fuller's wit has defrauded him of some of the praise of wisdom which is his due. There was nothing, however, of the reality, whatever there might be of the appearance, of profane or inhuman levity, in his mode of dealing with sacred or serious subjects. His was the natural expression of much hilarity conjoined with much wit. He would have been mirthful, whether he had had much wit or not; having also much wit, his mirth expressed itself in the forms most natural to him. He spoke only as he felt; and though we may think that another mode of speech would have been more proper, and better adapted to the ordinary feelings of mankind under the circumstances, we cannot consent to rank the *facetiæ* of Fuller on grave subjects, with the profane, heartless witticisms of those with whom nothing is sacred, and who speak lightly because they feel lightly. His whole life, and even his whole writings, prove him to have been possessed of genuine veneration for all that is divine, and genuine sympathy with all that is human.

The limits within which wit and humor may be lawfully used, are well laid down by himself in his "Holy and Profane State," in the essays on "Jesting and Gravity," and in his character of the "Faithful Minister." It would be too much to say that he has always acted strictly up to his own maxims; but it may be safely asserted that he seldom violates the most important of them, and that, when he did, it was in perfect unconsciousness of so doing. Of *profane* jests, he says in his strong manner: "Jest not with the two-edged sword of God's word. Will nothing please thee to wash thy hands in but the font? or to drink healths in but the church chalice?" On *inhuman* jests, he says: "Scoff not at the natural defects of any which are not in their power to amend. Oh, it is cruelty to beat a cripple with his own crutches!" In another place, he quaintly says, "It is *unnatural* to laugh at a natural." Speaking of the "Faithful Minister," he says, "that he will not use a light comparison to make thereof a grave application, for fear lest his poison go further than his antidote." But his sermons on the book of "Ruth" contain many curious instances of his oblivion of this maxim; of which a striking one is given by the editor of the recent edition of his "Holy and Profane State." In his essay on "Gravity," he touchingly pleads for a charitable construction of the levities of a mirthful temperament. "Some men," says he, "are of a very cheerful disposition; and God forbid that all such should be condemned for lightness! Oh, let not any envious eye disinherit men of that which is their 'portion in this life, comfortably to enjoy the blessings thereof'! Yet gravity must prune, not root out, our mirth." Gravity must have had hard work to do this in his own case; for as he himself says in another place, — beautifully commenting on a well-known line of Horace: "That fork must have strong tines wherewith one would thrust out nature."

The imagination of Fuller, though generally displaying itself in the forms imposed by his overflowing wit, was yet capable of suggesting images of great beauty, and of true poetic quality. Though lost in the perpetual obtrusion of that faculty to which every other was compelled to minister, it is brilliant enough to have made the reputation of any inferior writer; and we believe that what Coleridge has said of his wisdom, might as truly be said of his fancy; — his wit has equally defrauded both of the admiration due to them.

Fuller's imagination is often happily employed in embodying some strong apothegm, or maxim of practical wisdom, in a powerful and striking metaphor; the very best form in which they can be presented to us. There occur in his writings very many sentences of this kind, which would not be altogether unworthy of Bacon himself, and in which, as in that far greater genius, we have the combination of solid truth, beautiful imagery, and graceful expression; — where we know not which most to admire, — the value of the gem, the lustre of the polish, or the appropriateness of the setting.

In many respects, Fuller may be considered the very type and exemplar of that large class of religious writers of the seventeenth century, to which we emphatically apply the term "quaint." That word has long ceased to mean what it once meant. By derivation, and by original usage, it first signified "scrupulously elegant," "refined," "exact," "accurate," beyond the reach of common art. In time it came to be applied to whatever was designed to indicate these characteristics, — though excogitated with so elaborate a subtilty, as to trespass on ease and nature. In a word, it was applied to what was ingenious and fantastic, rather than tasteful or beautiful. It is now wholly used in this acceptation; and always implies some violation of true taste, some deviation from what the "natural" requires under the given circumstances. The application of the word, both to literary compositions and to the more material products of art, of course simultaneously underwent similar modifications.

Now, the age in which Fuller lived was the golden age of "quaintness" of all kinds; — in gardening, in architecture, in costume, in manners, in religion, in literature. As men improved external nature with a perverse expenditure of money and ingenuity, — made her yews and cypresses grow into peacocks and statues, — tortured and clipped her luxuriance into monotonous uniformity, — turned her graceful curves and spirals into straight lines and parallelograms, — compelled things incongruous to blend in artificial union, and then measured the merits of the work, not by the absurdity of the design, but by the difficulty of the execution; — so in literature, the curiously and elaborately unnatural was too often the sole object. Far-fetched allusions and strained similitudes, fantastic conceits and pedantic quotations, the eternal jingle of alliteration and antithesis, puns and quirks and verbal pleasantries of all kinds, — these too often formed the choicest objects of the writer's ambition. The excellence of the product was judged, not by its intrinsic beauty, but by the labor it involved, and the ingenuity it displayed.

But while much of the "quaint" literature of that age is now as little relished as the ruffs, wigs, and high-backed chairs of our great-great-grandfathers, there is not a little which will be held in everlasting remembrance. Not only are the works of powerful, although often perverted genius, full of thoughts, and images, and felicities of expression, which, being the offspring of truth and fancy, will be beautiful through all time; but the aspect in which the "quaint" itself appears to us will depend upon the character of the individual writer, and the nature of the subjects he treats. The constitution of Fuller's mind had such an affinity with the peculiarities of the day, that what was "quaint" in others seems to have been his natural element, — the sort of attire in which his active and eccentric genius loved to clothe itself. The habit which others perhaps slowly attained, and at length made (by those strong associations which can for a while sanctify any thing in taste or fashion) a second nature, seems to have cost him nothing. Allusions and images may appear odd, unaccountably odd, but in him they are evidently not far-fetched; they are spontaneously and readily presented by his teeming fancy: even his puns and alliterations seem the careless, irrepressible exuberances of a very sportive mind, — not racked and tortured out of an unwilling brain, as is the case with so many of his contemporaries. We are aware, of course, that it is the office of a correct judgment to circumscribe the extravagances of the suggestive faculty, and to select from the materials it offers only what is in harmony with good taste. All we mean is, that in the case of Fuller, the suggestions, however eccentric, were spontaneous, not artificial, — offered, not sought for. The water, however brackish or otherwise impure, still gushed from a natural spring, and was not brought up by the wheel and axle. His mind was a fountain, not a forcing-pump. Thus his very "quaintness" is also "nature," — nature in him, though it would not be so in others; and we therefore read his most outrageous extravagances with very different feelings from those with which we glance at the frigid conceits and dreary impertinences of many of his contemporaries. Nor do we simply feel indulgence towards them as spontaneous; their very spontaneity insures them an elasticity and vivacity of expression, which we should seek in vain in writers whose minds had less affinity with the genius of the day.

Nor are we to forget that there are certain *subjects* to which the "quaint" style of those times is better adapted than to others; and in which it appears not destitute of a certain fantastic grace and fitness. We mean subjects in which little of passion or emotion would be expected. When conviction or persuasion is the object, and directness of purpose and earnestness of feeling are essential, we do not say to success, but merely to gain a hearing, nothing can be more repulsive, because nothing more *unnatural*, than the "quaint" style; — nothing being more improbable than that far-fetched similitudes and labored prettinesses should offer themselves to the mind at such a moment; except, indeed, where universal custom has made (as in the case of some of our forefathers) quaintness itself a second nature. When lachrymatories were the fashion, it might, for aught we can tell, have been easy for the ancient mourner to drop a tear into the little cruet at any given moment. But, ordinarily, nothing is more certain than that the very sight of such a receptacle would, as it was carried round to the company, instantly annihilate all emotion, even if it did not turn tears into laughter. Not less repellent, under ordinary circumstances, are all the forms of the "quaint," when the object is to excite emotion, strong or deep. But it is not so with certain other subjects, in which the "quaint" itself is not without its recommendations. For example, in enforcing and illustrating moral maxims, in calmly inculcating lessons of life and manners, in depicting varieties of human character, — in all which cases no continuous reasoning, no warmth of passion, is expected or required; the fancy may well be indulged in her most sportive and playful moods, and allowed to attire the sententious aphorisms she is commissioned to recommend, in any way that seems to her best. She may travel in any circuit, however wide, for her illustrations, — may employ analogies, the very oddity of which shall insure their being remembered, — may lock up wisdom in any curious casket of antithesis or alliteration, — nay, may not disdain even a quip or a pun, when these may serve to stimulate attention, or to aid the memory. The very best specimens of the quaint style, at all events, are on such themes. Such, to mention a single example, is Earle's "Microcosmography"; such, also, are the best and most finished of Fuller's own writings, — as his "Profane and Holy State," his "Good Thoughts in Bad Times," his "Good Thoughts in Worse Times," and his "Mixed Contemplations." The composition in such works often reminds us of some gorgeous piece of cabinet-work from China or India, in which ivory is richly inlaid with gems and gold. Though we may not think the materials always harmonious, or the shape perfectly consistent with our notions of elegance, we cannot fail to admire the richness of the whole product, and the costliness and elaboration of the workmanship.

We have said, that in many respects Fuller may be considered the master of the quaint school of the seventeenth century. It is by no means to be forgotten, however, that he is almost entirely free from many of the most offensive peculiarities of that school. As those qualities of quaintness he possesses in common with his contemporaries are, as already intimated, natural to *him*, so from those which could hardly be natural in *any*, he is for the most part free. Thus he is almost wholly untainted by that vain pedantry, which so deeply infects the style of many of the greatest writers of his age; more especially Burton, Jeremy Taylor, Donne, and Browne. His quotations are very rare, and generally very apt, introduced for use, not ostentation. You nowhere find that curious mosaic-work of different tongues, which is so common in the pages of Burton and Taylor. You never find him, as you do this last writer, enforcing some commonplace of moral wisdom by half a dozen quotations from different writers, as though afraid to allow even a truism to walk abroad, except under the guard of some venerable names; or as though men would not believe their own senses, unless they had the authority of antiquity for doing so. From all the forms of learned pedantry, Fuller may be pronounced almost entirely free. His reading was various, and his learning great; though not to be compared to those of the above writers, whose powers, vast as they were, often sank beneath the load of their more prodigious erudition.

Fuller's style is also free, to a great extent, from the Latinisms which form so large an element in that of many of his great contemporaries. Both in style and diction, he is much more idiomatic than most of them. The structure of his sentences is far less involved and periodic, while his words are in much larger proportion of Saxon derivation. Something may, no doubt, be attributed to the character of his mind; his shrewd practical sense leading him, as it generally leads those who are strongly characterized by it, to prefer the homely and universally intelligible in point of expression. Still more, however, is to be attributed to the habits of his life. He was not the learned recluse which many of his contemporaries were, and neither read nor wrote half so much in the learned tongues. He loved to gossip with the common people; and when collecting materials for his historical works, would listen, we are told, for hours together, to their prolix accounts of local traditions and family legends. Many, very many of the good old English words now lost, may be found in his writings. One passage of vigorous idiomatic English, and which is, in many other respects, a striking exemplification of Fuller's manner, we cannot refrain from quoting. It is from his "Essay on Tombs."

"Tombs are the clothes of the dead. A grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered. Most moderate men have been careful for the decent interment of their corpses; . . . . . both hereby to prevent the negligence of heirs, and to mind him of his mortality. Virgil tells us, that when bees swarm in the air, and two armies, meeting together, fight as it were a set battle with great violence, — cast but a little dust upon them, and they will be quiet: —

'Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.'

"Thus the most ambitious motions and thoughts of man's mind are quickly quelled when dust is thrown on him, whereof his fore-prepared sepulchre is an excellent remembrancer. Yet some seem to have built their tombs, therein to bury their thoughts of dying; never thinking thereof, but embracing the world with greater greediness. A gentleman made choice of a fair stone, and, intending the same for his gravestone, caused it to be pitched up in a field a pretty distance from his house, and used often to shoot at it for his exercise. 'Yea, but,' said a wag that stood by, 'you would be loath, Sir, to hit the mark.' And so are many unwilling to die, who, notwithstanding, have erected their monuments.

"Tombs ought, in some sort, to be proportioned, not to the wealth, but deserts, of the party interred. Yet may we see some rich man of mean worth, loaden under a tomb big enough for a prince to bear. There were officers appointed in the Grecian games, who always, by public authority, did pluck down the statues erected to the victors, if they exceeded the true symmetry and proportion of their bodies.

"The shortest, plainest, and truest epitaphs are best. — I say, 'the shortest'; for when a passenger sees a chronicle written on a tomb, he takes it on trust some great man lies there buried, without taking pains to examine who he is. Mr. Camden, in his 'Remains,' presents us with examples of great men that had little epitaphs. And when once I asked a witty gentleman, an honored friend of mine, what epitaph was fittest to be written on Mr. Camden's tomb, — 'Let it be,' said he, '"Camden's Remains."' I say also, 'the plainest'; for except the sense lie above ground, few will trouble themselves to dig for it. Lastly, it must be 'true'; not as in some monuments, where the red veins in the marble may seem to blush at the falsehoods written on it. He was a witty man that first taught a stone to speak, but he was a wicked man that taught it first to lie.

"To want a grave is the cruelty of the living, not the misery of the dead. An English gentleman, not long since, did lie on his death-bed in Spain, and the Jesuits did flock about him to pervert him to their religion. All was in vain. Their last argument was, 'If you will not turn Roman Catholic, then your body shall be unburied.' 'Then,' answered he, 'I will stink'; and so turned his head and died. Thus love, if not to the dead, to the living, will make him, if not a grave, a hole. . . . . . A good memory is the best monument. Others are subject to casualty and time; and we know that the pyramids themselves, doting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders. To conclude; let us be careful to provide rest for our souls, and our bodies will provide rest for themselves. And let us not be herein like unto gentlewomen, who care not to keep the inside of the orange, but candy and preserve only the outside thereof."

One other Essay, which is not only a fine specimen of Fuller's best manner, but is full of sound practical criticism, we cannot resist the temptation to cite. It is on "Fancy."

"Fancy is an inward sense of the soul, for a while retaining and examining things brought in thither by the common sense. It is the most boundless and restless faculty of the soul; for, whilst the understanding and the will are kept as it were *in liberâ custodiâ* to their objects of *verum et bonum*, the fancy is free from all engagements. It digs without spade, sails without ship, flies without wings, builds without charges, fights without bloodshed; in a moment striding from the centre to the circumference of the world, by a kind of omnipotency creating and annihilating things in an instant; and things divorced in nature are married in fancy, as in a lawful place. It is also most restless; whilst the senses are bound, and reason in a manner asleep, fancy, like a sentinel, walks the round, ever working, never wearied.

"The chief diseases of the fancy are either, that it is too wild and high-soaring, or else too low and grovelling, or else too desultory and over-voluble.

"Of the first: — If thy fancy be but a little too rank, age itself will correct it. To lift too high is no fault in a young horse; because, with travelling, he will mend it, for his own ease. Thus, lofty fancies in young men will come down of themselves; and, in process of time, the overplus will shrink to be but even measure. But if this will not do it, then observe these rules: —

"Take part always with thy judgment against thy fancy, in any thing wherein they shall dissent. If thou suspectest thy conceits too luxuriant, herein account thy suspicion a legal conviction, and damn whatsoever thou doubtest of. Warily Tully: *Benè monent, qui vetant quicquam facere de quo dubitas, æquum sit an iniquum.*

"Take the advice of a faithful friend, and submit thy inventions to his censure. When thou pennest an oration, let him have the power of *Index Expurgatorius*, to expunge what he pleaseth; and do not thou, like a fond mother, cry if the child of thy brain be corrected for playing the wanton. Mark the arguments and reasons of his alterations, — why that phrase least proper, this passage more cautious and advised; and, after a while, thou shalt perform the place in thine own person, and not go out of thyself for a censurer.

"If thy fancy be too low and humble, let thy judgment be king, but not tyrant, over it, to condemn harmless, yea commendable, conceits. Some, for fear their orations should giggle, will not let them smile. Give it also liberty to rove, for it will not be extravagant. There is no danger that weak folks, if they walk abroad, will straggle far, as wanting strength.

"Acquaint thyself with reading poets, for there fancy is in her throne; and, in time, the sparks of the author's wit will catch hold on the reader, and inflame him with love, liking, and desire of imitation. I confess there is more required to teach one to write than to see a copy. However, there is a secret force of fascination in reading poems, to raise and provoke fancy.

"If thy fancy be over-voluble, then whip this vagrant home to the first object whereon it should be settled. Indeed, nimbleness is the perfection of this faculty, but levity the bane of it. Great is the difference betwixt a swift horse, and a skittish, that will stand on no ground. Such is the ubiquitary fancy, which will keep long residence on no one subject, but is so courteous to strangers, that it ever welcomes that conceit most which comes last, and new species supplant the old ones, before seriously considered. If this be the fault of thy fancy, I say, whip it home to the first object whereon it should be settled. This do as often as occasion requires, and by degrees the fugitive servant will learn to abide by his work without running away.

"Acquaint thyself by degrees with hard and knotty studies, — as school-divinity, which will clog thy over-nimble fancy. True, at the first, it will be as welcome to thee as a prison, and their very solutions will seem knots unto thee. But take not too much at once, lest thy brain turn edge. Taste it first as a potion for physic; and by degrees thou shalt drink it as beer for thirst: practice will make it pleasant. Mathematics are also good for this purpose; if beginning to try a conclusion, thou must make an end, lest thou losest thy pains that are past, and must proceed seriously and exactly. I meddle not with those Bedlam fancies, all whose conceits are antics; but leave them for the physicians to purge with hellebore.

"To clothe low creeping matter with high-flown language is not fine fancy, but flat foolery. It rather loads than raises a wren, to fasten the feathers of an ostrich to her wings. Some men's speeches are like the high mountains in Ireland, having a dirty bog in the top of them; the very ridge of them in high words having nothing of worth, but what rather stalls than delights the auditor.

"Fine fancies in manufactures invent engines rather pretty than useful. And, commonly, one trade is too narrow for them. They are better to project new ways than to prosecute old, and are rather skilful in many mysteries than thriving in one. They affect not voluminous inventions, wherein many years must constantly be spent to perfect them, except there be in them variety of pleasant employment.

"Imagination (the work of the fancy) hath produced real effects. Many serious and sad examples hereof may be produced. I will only insist on a merry one. A gentleman having led a company of children beyond their usual journey, they began to be weary, and jointly cried to him to carry them; which, because of their multitude, he could not do, but told them he would provide them horses to ride on. Then cutting little wands out of the hedge as nags for them, and a great stake as a gelding for himself, thus mounted, fancy put mettle into their legs, and they came cheerfully home.

"Fancy runs most furiously when a guilty conscience drives it. One that owed much money, and had many creditors, as he walked

London streets in the evening, a tenter-hook caught his cloak. "At whose suit?" said he, conceiving some bailiff had arrested him. Thus guilty consciences are afraid where no fear is, and count every creature they meet a sergeant sent from God to punish them."

The *historical* works of Fuller are simply a caricature of the species of composition to which they professedly belong; a systematic violation of all its proprieties. The gravity and dignity of the historic Muse are habitually violated by him. Nay, more; not only is he continually cracking his jokes, and perpetrating his puns; his matter is as full of treason against the laws of history as his manner. His very method — if we may be allowed such an abuse of language — consists in a contempt of all method. He has so constructed his works as to secure himself the indulgence of perpetual digression, — of harboring and protecting every vagrant story that may ask shelter in his pages, — of rambling hither and thither, as the fit takes him, — and of introducing all sorts of things, where, when, and how he pleases. To this end he has cut up his "Histories" into little paragraphs or sections, which often have as little connection with one another as with the general subject. Any curious fact, any anecdote, is sufficient warrant in his opinion for a digression; provided only it has any conceivable relation to the events he happens to be narrating. A mere chronological connection is always deemed enough to justify him in bringing the most diverse matters into juxtaposition; while the little spaces which divide his sections from one another, like the little compartments in a cabinet of curiosities, are thought sufficient lines of demarcation between the oddest incongruities. His "Worthies of England" is in fact a rambling tour over the English Counties, taken in alphabetical order, in which, though his chief object undoubtedly is to give an account of the principal families resident in each, and of the illustrious men they have severally produced, he cannot refrain from thrusting in a world of gossip on their natural history and geography; on their productions, laws customs, and proverbs. It may be said that this was an unfinished work; that we have not the fabric itself, but only the bricks and mortar of which it was to be constructed. We reply that the general plan is sufficiently disclosed, and could not have been materially altered had the author lived to complete the work. But is his "Church History" a whit better in this respect? Never was there such a medley. First, each book and section is introduced by a quaint dedication to one or other of his many admirers or patrons. Nicholson in his "English Historical Library" is rather severe on his motives for such a multiplication of dedications. Secondly, the several paragraphs into which the "Church History" is divided (most of them introduced by some quaint title) are many of them as little connected with church history as with the history of China. Thus, in one short "section," comprising the period from 1330 to 1361, we find "paragraphs" relating to "the ignorance of the English in curious clothing," — to "fuller's earth," which, he tells us, "was a precious commodity," — to the manufacture of "woollen cloth," and to the sumptuary laws which "restrained excess in apparel."

Here is a strange mixture in one short chapter! Church history, as all the world knows, is compelled to treat of matters which have a very remote relation to the Church of Christ; but who could have suspected that it could, by possibility, take cognizance of fuller's earth and woollens? Even Fuller himself seems a little astonished at his own hardihood; and lest any should *at first sight* fail to see the perfect congruity of such topics, he engages, with matchless effrontery, to show the connection between them. His reasons are so very absurd, and given so much in his own manner, that we cannot refrain from citing them. "But enough of this subject, which let none condemn for a deviation from church history. First, because it would not grieve me to go a *little* out of the way, if the way be good, as the digression is, for the credit and profit of our country. Secondly, it reductively belongeth to the church history, seeing many poor people, both young and old, formerly charging the parishes (as appeared by the account of the church officers) were hereby enabled to maintain themselves"!!

It may well be supposed, after what has been said, that his "Histories" are not to be judged by the ordinary rules applied to that class of compositions. They possess intrinsic value only as collections and repertories of materials for other and less eccentric writers. In this point of view he often modestly represents them; and, in fact, as we conjecture, for the very purpose of securing the larger license of rambling. The praise of method and regularity (if indeed he formed any notion of these) he coveted little, compared with the free indulgence of his vagrant and gossiping humor. He loved, like Edie Ochiltree, "to daunder along the green lanes," to leave the dusty high-road of continuous history, and solace himself in every "by-path meadow" that invited his feet by its softness and verdure. Even as a collector of materials, his merits have been strongly called in question by Bishop Nicholson. "Through the whole of his 'Church History,'" says the critic, "he is so fond of his own wit, that he does not seem to have minded what he was about. The gravity of an historian (much more of an ecclesiastical one) requires a far greater care, both of the matter and style of his work, than is here to be met with. If a pretty story comes in his way that affords scope for clinch and droll, off it goes with all the gayety of the stage, without staying to inquire whether it have any foundation in truth or not; and even the most serious and authentic parts of it are so interlaced with pun and quibble, that it looks as if the man had designed to ridicule the annals of our Church into fable and romance. Yet if it were possible to refine it well, the work would be of good use, since there are in it some things of moment hardly to be had elsewhere, which may often illustrate dark passages in more serious writers. These are not to be despised where his authorities are cited, and appear credible. But in other matters, where he is singular, and without his vouchers, *μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν*."

That Fuller has intermingled a great deal of gossip and rubbish with his facts is, indeed, most true; but then, usually, he neither receives such matter for truth himself, nor delivers it for truth to others; so that the worst that can be said of him on that score is, that he is content to merge his historic character in that of a retailer of amusing oddities. But that he is careless in the admission or investigation of facts, we cannot admit, without better proof than Nicholson has furnished; and we much fear that the censure of the critic was excited rather by Fuller's candor, than by either his partiality or his negligence. If he had been a more thorough partisan, and on the side of his censor, we should have been spared some of the indignation of this "historian" of "historians." With indolence in his researches, at all events, Fuller cannot be justly taxed. Frequently compelled, in his capacity of chaplain to the royal army, to change his quarters, often writing without the advantage of books and access to documents, it was impossible that he should not fall into serious errors; but he diligently availed himself of such resources as were within his reach. As already intimated, he would spend hours in patiently listening to the long-winded recitals of rustic ignorance, in hopes of gleaning some neglected tradition, or of rescuing some half-forgotten fact from oblivion. His works everywhere disclose the true antiquarian spirit, the genuine veneration for whatever bears the "charming rust," or exhales the musty odor of age; and it is plain that, if his opportunities had been equal either to his inclinations or his aptitudes, he would have been no mean proficient in the arts of spelling out and piercing the mouldering records of antiquity, — of deciphering documents, — of adjusting dates, — of investigating the origin of old customs, and the etymology of old names, — of interpreting proverbial sayings, — of sifting the *residuum* of truth in obscure tradition, and of showing the manner in which facts have passed into fable. Like many men of the same stamp, however, he had not the faculty of discriminating the relative value of the facts thus elicited; but frequently exhibits the most insignificant with as much prominence as the most valuable: like them, too, he often mistakes probability for demonstration, and magnifies conjecture into certainty. In some respects he bore a sort of resemblance (though in others how different!) to Herodotus and Froissart. The charm of continuous narrative, indeed, for which they are so justly eminent, he possessed not; still less the happy art of a picturesque and graceful disposition of his materials. But in his diligent heed to traditional stories, in the personal pains and labor which he was willing to take in the accumulation of his materials, in the eagerness and the patience with which he prosecuted the chase, in the large infusion of merely curious and amusing matter amongst the sober verities of history, by which his "Worthies" and his "Church History" are equally marked, there is some resemblance. The traditions, and "the reports," and the "sayings" of the common people, were as dear to him as was the ὡς λέγουσι to the father of history. Like the above writers, too, he usually lets us know for what he vouches, and what he gives on the report of others; and we believe that, as in their case, his principal statements will be found more nearly true the more they are investigated. But, after all, his professedly historical works are not to be read as *histories;* their strange want of method, the odd intermixture of incongruous and irrelevant matter they contain, and the eccentricities of all kinds with which they abound, will for ever prevent that. They are rather books of amusement; in which wisdom and whim, important facts and impertinent fables, solid reflections and quaint drolleries, refined wit and wretched puns, great beauties and great negligences, are mingled in equal proportions. Perused as books of amusement, there are few in the English language which a man, with the slightest tincture of love for our early literature, can take up with a keener relish; while an enthusiast, whether by natural predisposition or acquired habit, will, like Charles Lamb, absolutely riot in their wild luxuriance.

Faulty as Fuller's Histories are, it will be seen that he yet possessed in great perfection many of the most essential conditions of excellence in that department of composition. His spirit of research, his love of minute investigation, his fine imagination, his boundless vivacity, his freedom from prejudice, his liberality and candor, would seem to have insured success; and that success would doubtless have been eminent, had he not given such license to his inordinate wit, so freely indulged his oddities of manner, and set all method at defiance. These defects have gone far to neutralize his other admirable qualifications for historical composition; and what was absurdly said of Shakspeare, might with some propriety be said of him, "that a *pun* was the Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it."

In a moral and religious point of view, the character of Fuller is entitled to our veneration, and is altogether one of the most attractive and interesting which that age exhibits to us. His buoyant temper, and his perpetual mirthfulness, were wholly at variance with that austerity and rigor which characterized so many of the religionists of his time; but his life and conduct bore ample testimony that he possessed genuine and habitual piety. Amidst all his levity of manner, there was still the gravity of the heart, — deep veneration for all things sacred; and while his wit clothed even his religious thoughts and feelings with irresistible pleasantry, his manner is as different from that of the scorner, as the innocent laugh of childhood from the malignant chuckle of a demon. In all the relations of domestic and social life, his conduct was most exemplary. In one point, especially, does he appear in honorable contrast with the bigots of all parties in that age of strife, — he had learned, partly from his natural benevolence, and partly from a higher principle, the lessons of "that charity which thinketh no evil," and which so few of his contemporaries knew how to practise. His very moderation, however, as is usually the case, made him suspected by the zealots of both parties. Though a sincere friend of the Church of England, he looked with sorrow (which in his "Church History" he took no pains to disguise) on the severities practised towards the Puritans; and everywhere adopts the tone of apology for their supposed errors, and of compassion for their undoubted sufferings. His candor and impartiality in treating some of the most delicate portions of our ecclesiastical history — as, for example, the Hampton Court controversy, and the administration of Laud — are in admirable contrast with the resolute spirit of partisanship which has inspired so many of the writers of the Church of England. There were not wanting persons, however, who, as we have seen, insinuated that his candor in these and other instances was nothing but a peace-offering to the men in power at the time he published his "Church History." But, not to urge that he has said too much on the other side to justify such a supposition, his whole manner is that of an honest man, striving to be impartial, even if not always successful. Had he been the unprincipled timeserver this calumny would represent him, he would have suppressed a little more. Coleridge says that he was "incomparably the most sensible, the least prejudiced, great man of an age that boasted a galaxy of great men." If this statement be confined to "religious prejudices," there are, it must be confessed, few of his age who can be compared with him. As to prejudices of other kinds, he seems to have shared in those of most of his contemporaries. It is hard, or rather impossible, to be wholly beyond one's age. He believed in witches; he was a resolute stickler for the royal prerogative of curing the king's evil; though whether his loyalty or philosophy had most to do with his convictions on that point, may well admit of doubt. It is true that he treats the idle legends and fabled miracles of Romish superstition with sovereign contempt; but then his Protestantism came to the aid of his reason, and, considering the superstitions he has himself retained, the former may be fairly supposed to have offered the more powerful logic of the two.

Though Fuller cannot be accused of sharing the bigotry and bitterness of his age, he is by no means perfectly free from a very opposite vice with which that age was nearly as chargeable, — we mean flattery. His multitudinous dedications to his numerous patrons, contained in the "Church History," are, many of them, very striking, and even beautiful compositions, and full of ingenious turns of thought; but they certainly attribute as much of excellence to the objects of them, as either history, or tradition, or charity can warrant us in ascribing. Something may, however, be pardoned to the spirit of the age, and something to the gratitude or necessities of the author. But that any author, even a hungry one, could be brought to write them, is a wonder; that any patron could, either with or without a blush, appropriate them, is a still greater one. It is in the conclusion to his character of the "Good King," in his "Holy State," that our author has fallen most unworthily into the complimentary extravagance of the times. He, of course, makes the reigning monarch the reality of the fair picture, and draws his character in language which truth might well interpret into the severest irony.

It would be improper to close this analysis of one of the most singular intellects that ever appeared in the world of letters, without saying a word or two of the prodigies related of his powers of memory. That he had a very tenacious one may easily be credited, though some of its traditional feats almost pass belief. It is said that he could "repeat five hundred strange words after once hearing them, and could make use of a sermon *verbatim*, under the like circumstances." Still further, it is said that he undertook, in passing from Temple Bar to the extremity of Cheapside, to tell, at his return, every sign as it stood in order on both sides of the way, (repeating them either backwards or forwards,) and that he performed the task exactly. This is pretty well, considering that in that day every shop had its sign. The interpretation of such hyperboles, however, is very easy; they signify, at all events, thus much, — that he had an extraordinary memory. That many of the reports respecting it were false or exaggerated, may be gathered from an amusing anecdote recorded by himself. "None alive," says he, "ever heard me pretend to the *art* of memory, who, in my book (*Holy State*) have decried it as a trick, no art; and, indeed, is more of fancy than memory. I confess, some ten years since, when I came out of the pulpit of St. Dunstan's East, one (who since wrote a book thereof) told me in the vestry, before credible people, that he, in Sidney College, had taught me the *art of memory*. I returned unto him, *that it was not so*, for *I* could not remember *that I had ever seen him before!* which, I conceive, was a real refutation."

One is prepared to meet with all sorts of oddities of manner about such a man, for it would be strange that a person so eccentric in all his writings should not have been eccentric in his private habits; but really the following account of his method of composition passes belief. It is said that he was in "the habit of writing the first words of every line near the margin down to the foot of the paper, and that then, beginning again, he filled up the vacuities exactly, without spaces, interlineations, or contractions"; and that he "would so connect the ends and beginnings that the sense would appear as complete as if it had been written in a continued series, after the ordinary manner." This, we presume, is designed to be a compliment to the ease with which he performed the process of mental composition, and the accuracy with which his memory could transfer what he had meditated to paper. But though he might occasionally perform such a feat for the amusement of his friends, it never could have been his ordinary practice.

As we quoted, at the commencement of this essay, the opinion entertained of our author by Coleridge, we shall conclude it by citing that of Charles Lamb, than whom there could not be a more competent judge. "The writings of Fuller," says he, "are usually designated by the title of quaint, and with sufficient reason; for such was his natural bias to conceits, that I doubt not, upon most occasions, it would have been going out of his way to have expressed himself out of them. But his wit is not always *lumen siccum*, a dry faculty of surprising; on the contrary, his conceits are oftentimes deeply steeped in human feeling and passion. Above all, his way of telling a story, for its eager liveliness, and the perpetual running commentary of the narrator, happily blended with the narration, is perhaps unequalled."*

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* Since the preceding essay was published, have appeared "Memorials of the Life and Works of Fuller, by Rev. Arthur T. Russell, B. C. L." In that volume, all that either history or tradition has left respecting our author has been laboriously and faithfully compiled; and thither the reader, curious about the biography of this eccentric genius, is referred for more minute information than could be given in the sketch at the commencement of this essay.

ANDREW MARVELL.*

Andrew Marvell was a native of Kingston-upon-Hull, where he was born November 15, 1620. His father, of the same name, was master of the grammar-school, and lecturer of Trinity Church in that town. He is described by Fuller and Echard as "facetious," so that his son's wit, it would appear, was hereditary. He is also said to have displayed considerable eloquence in the pulpit; and even to have excelled in that kind of oratory which would seem at first sight least allied to a mirthful temperament, — that is, the *pathetic*. The conjunction, however, of keen wit and deep sensibility has been found in a far greater number of instances than would at first sight be imagined; as might be easily proved by examples, if this were the place for it. Nor would it be difficult to give the *rationale* of the fact. Each has its natural affinities with genius, and both very generally accompany it.

The diligence of Mr. Marvell's pulpit preparations has been celebrated by Fuller in his "Worthies," with characteristic quaintness. "He was a most excellent preacher," says he, "who never broached what he had new brewed, but preached what he had pre-studied some competent time before, insomuch that he was wont to say, that he would cross the common proverb, which called Saturday the working day and Monday the holiday of preachers." The eloquence of the pulpit he enforced by the more persuasive eloquence of a consistent life. During the pestilential epidemic of 1637, we are told that he distinguished himself by an intrepid discharge of his pastoral functions.

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* "Edinburgh Review," January, 1844.

The Life of Andrew Marvell, the celebrated Patriot; with Extracts and Selections from his Prose and Poetical Works. By John Dove. 12mo. London. 1832.

Having given early indications of superior talents, young Andrew was sent, when not quite fifteen years of age, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was partly or wholly maintained by an exhibition from his native town. He had not been long there, when, like Chillingworth, he was ensnared by the proselyting arts of the Jesuits; who, with subtlety equal to their zeal, commissioned their emissaries specially to aim at the conversion of such of the university youths as gave indications of signal ability. It appears that he was inveigled from college to London. Having been tracked thither by his father, he was discovered after some months in a bookseller's shop, and restored to the university; where, during the two succeeding years, he pursued his studies with diligence. About this period he lost his father under circumstances worth relating.

The death of this good man forms one of those little domestic tragedies, — not infrequent in real life, — to which imagination itself can scarcely add one touching incident, and which are as affecting as any that fiction can furnish. It appears that on the other side of the Humber lived a lady (an intimate friend of Marvell's father) who had an only daughter, equally lovely and beloved. This idol her mother could scarcely bear to be out of her sight. On one occasion, however, she yielded to the importunity of Mr. Marvell, and suffered her daughter to cross the water to Hull, to be present at the baptism of one of his children. The day after the ceremony the young lady was to return. The weather was tempestuous, and on reaching the river's side, accompanied by Mr. Marvell, the boatmen endeavored to dissuade her from attempting the passage. But, afraid of alarming her mother by prolonging her absence, she persisted. Mr. Marvell added his importunities to the arguments of the boatmen, but in vain. Finding her inflexible, he told her that, as she had incurred this peril for his sake, he felt himself " bound in honor and conscience " not to desert her ; and, having prevailed on some boatmen to hazard the passage, they embarked together. As they were putting off, he flung his gold-headed cane on shore, and told the spectators, that, in case he should never return, it was to be given his son, with the injunction " to remember his father." The boat was upset and both were lost.

As soon as the mother had a little recovered the shock, she sent for the orphan, intimated her intention to provide for his education, and at her death left him all she possessed.

One of his biographers informs us that young Marvell took his degree of B. A. in the year 1638, and was admitted to a scholarship.* If so, he did not retain it very long. Though in no further danger from the Jesuits, he seems to have been beset by more formidable enemies in his own bosom. Either from too early becoming his own master, or from being betrayed into follies to which his lively temperament and social qualities peculiarly exposed him, he became negligent of his studies ; and having absented himself from certain " exercises," and otherwise been guilty of sundry unacademic irregularities, he, with four others, was adjudged by the master and seniors unworthy of " receiving any further benefit from the college," unless they showed just cause to the contrary within three months. The required vindication does not appear to have been found, or at all events was never offered. The record of this transaction bears date September 24, 1641.

Soon after this, probably at the commencement of 1642, Marvell seems to have set out on his travels, in the course of which he visited a great part of Europe. At Rome he stayed a considerable time, where Milton was then residing, and where, in all probability, their lifelong friendship commenced. With an intrepidity, characteristic of both, it is said they openly argued against the superstitions of Rome within the precincts of the Vatican. It was here, also, that Marvell made the first essay of his satirical powers in a lampoon on Richard Flecknoe. It is now remembered only as having suggested the more effective satire of Dryden on the laureate Shadwell. At Paris he made another attempt at satire in Latin, of about the same order of merit. The subject of it was an abbé named Lancelot Joseph de Maniban, who professed to interpret the characters and prognosticate the fortunes of strangers by an inspection of their handwriting.

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* Cooke, in the Life prefixed to Marvell's Poems. 1726.

After this we have no trace whatever of Marvell for some years; and his biographers have, as usual, endeavored to supply the deficiency by conjecture, — some of them so idly, that they have made him secretary to an embassy which had then no existence.

Mr. Dove * says, that this lack of information respecting

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* We gladly admit that Mr. Dove's little volume is a tolerably full and accurate compilation of what is known to us of Andrew Marvell's history, and contains some pleasant extracts from his writings. But we must express our regret that he has been, in a trifling degree, misled, by adhering too literally to the etymology of the word "compilation." It is true that "compilation" comes from *compilatio*, and equally true that *compilatio* means "pillage"; but it does not follow that "compilation" is to be literally "pillage." A considerable number of sentences, sometimes whole paragraphs, are transferred from Mr. D'Israeli's Miscellanies, and from two articles on Andrew Marvell which appeared in the "Retrospective Review" some twenty years ago, without alteration, and without any sort of acknowledgment. Had they been printed between inverted commas, and the sources specified, we should have called it "compilation," but no "pillage"; as it is, we must call it pillage, and not compilation. Mr. Dove may, it is true, have been the author of the articles in question. If so, there was no conceivable reason why he should not have owned them; and we can only regret that he has omitted to do it. If not, we cannot justify the use he has made of them.

Marvell extends over eleven years; — not quite, however, even on his own showing; for the very next record he supplies tells us at least how the first four years of this period were spent, and a considerable though indeterminate portion at the close of it. The record referred to is a recommendatory letter of Milton to Bradshaw, dated February 21, 1652. It appears that Marvell was then an unsuccessful candidate for the office of assistant Latin secretary. In this letter, after describing Marvell as a man of "singular desert," both from "report" and personal "converse," he proceeds to say: "He hath spent four years abroad, in Holland, France, Italy, and Spain, to very good purpose, as I believe, and the gaining of those four languages; besides, he is a scholar, and well read in the Latin and Greek authors, and no doubt of an approved conversation; *for he comes now lately out of the house of the Lord Fairfax, where he was intrusted to give some instructions in the languages to the lady, his daughter.*" Milton concludes the letter with a sentence which fully discloses the very high estimate he had formed of Marvell's abilities: "This, my lord, I write sincerely, without any other end than to perform my duty to the public in helping them to a humble servant; laying aside those jealousies and that emulation which mine own condition might suggest to me by bringing in *such a coadjutor.*"

In the following year, 1653, Marvell was appointed tutor to Cromwell's nephew, Mr. Dutton. Shortly after receiving his charge, he addressed a letter to the Protector, from which we extract one or two sentences characteristic of his caution, good sense, and conscientiousness. "I have taken care," says he, speaking of his pupil, "to examine him several times in the presence of Mr. Oxenbridge, as those who weigh and tell over money before some witness ere they take charge of it; for I thought there might be possibly some lightness in the coin, or error in the telling, which hereafter I should be bound to make good." . . . . . "He is of a gentle and waxen disposition; and God be praised, I cannot say he hath brought with him any evil impression, and I shall hope to set nothing into his spirit but what may be of a good sculpture. He hath in him two things that make youth most easy to be managed, — modesty, which is the bridle to vice, and emulation, which is the spur to virtue. . . . . . Above all, I shall labor to make him sensible of his duty to God; for then we begin to serve faithfully when we consider He is our master."

On the publication of Milton's second "Defence," Marvell was commissioned to present it to the Protector. After doing so, he addressed a letter of compliment to Milton, the terms of which evince the natural admiration with which his illustrious friend had inspired him. His eulogy of the "Defence" is as emphatic as that of the Paradise Lost, in the well-known recommendatory lines prefixed to most editions of that poem.

In 1657, Marvell entered upon his duties as assistant Latin secretary with Milton; Cromwell died in the following year; and from this period till the Parliament of 1660, there is no further trace of him. We have seen it affirmed that he became member for Hull in 1658. But this is not true, and would be at variance with the statement in his epitaph, where it is said that he had occupied that post nearly twenty years. Had he been first elected in 1658, he would have been member somewhat more than that period.

During his long Parliamentary career, Marvell maintained a close correspondence with his constituents, — regularly sending to them, almost every post-night during the sittings of Parliament, an account of its proceedings. These letters were first made public by Captain Thompson, and occupy about four hundred pages of the first volume of his edition of Marvell's works. They are written with great plainness, and with a business-like brevity, which must have satisfied, we should think, even the most laconic of his merchant constituents. They are chiefly valuable now, as affording proofs of the ability and fidelity with which their author discharged his public duties; and as throwing light on some curious points of Parliamentary usage and history. Some few sentences, interesting on these accounts, may be worth extracting. Of his diligence, the copiousness and punctuality of the correspondence itself are themselves the best proofs; but many of the letters incidentally disclose others not less significant. The following evidence of it, few members now-a-days would be disposed to give, and no constituency, we should imagine, would be unreasonable enough to expect: "Sir, I must beg your excuse for paper, pens, writing, and every thing; for really I have by ill chance neither eat nor drank from yesterday at noon till six o'clock to-night, that the House rose."[*] And again: "Really the business of the House hath been of late so earnest daily, and so long, that I have not had the time and scarce vigor left me, by night, to write to you; and to-day, because I would not omit any longer, I lose my dinner to make sure of this letter."[†] On another occasion he says: "'T is nine at night, and we are but just now risen; and I write these few words in the post-house, for sureness that my letter be not too late."[‡] In one letter we find him saying: "I am something bound up, that I cannot write about your public affairs; but I assure you they *break my sleep*."[§]

Of his minute attention to all their local interests, and his vigilant care over them, these letters afford ample proof; and in this respect are not unworthy of the study of honorable members of the present day. He usually commences each session of Parliament by requesting his constituents to consider, whether there were any local affairs in which they might more particularly require his aid, and to give him timely notice of their wishes. His prudence is conspicuous in his abstinence from any dangerous comments on public affairs; he usually contents himself with detailing bare facts. This caution was absolutely necessary at a period when the officials of the post-office made no scruple of breaking the seal of private correspondence for the purpose of obtaining information for the government. On one occasion this seems to have been done in his own case. He tells his constituents that a letter of his had been shown about town: they, in a very complimentary reply, vehemently disclaim all knowledge of any breach of trust. In acknowledging this letter, he says: "I am very well satisfied, Gentlemen, by your letter, that it was none of you; but it seems, therefore, that there is *some sentinel set both upon you and upon me*, and to know it therefore is a sufficient caution: the best of it is, that none of us, I believe, either do say or write any thing, but what we care not though it be made public, although we do not desire it."* He, notwithstanding, repeatedly admonishes them not to let his letters be seen by any but themselves. In this respect, there is a striking yet perfectly natural contrast between the cautious statements of facts in his public correspondence, and the lively comments upon them in his private letters; in which his indignant patriotism expresses itself with characteristic severity against the corruptions of the court. Thus, in a letter to a friend in Persia, we find the following memorable passage: "Now, after my usual method, leaving to others what relates to business, I address myself, which is all that I am good for, to be your gazetteer. The King having, upon pretence of the great preparations of his neighbors, demanded three hundred thousand pounds for his navy (though, in conclusion, he hath not set out any), and that the Parliament should pay his debts (which the ministers would never particularize to the House of Commons), our House gave several bills. You see how far things were stretched, though beyond reason, there being no satisfaction how those debts were contracted, and all men foreseeing that what was given would not be applied to discharge the debts, which I hear are at this day risen to four millions; but diverted, as formerly. Nevertheless, such was the number of the constant courtiers increased by the apostate patriots, who were bought off for that turn, some at six, others ten, one at fifteen thousand pounds in money, besides what offices, lands, and reversions to others, that it *is a mercy they gave not away the whole land and liberty of England*."*

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[*] Marvell's Letters, p. 302.

[†] Ibid., p. 83.

[‡] Ibid., p. 106.

[§] Ibid., p. 33.

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 262.

In the same letter he thus speaks of the shamelessness with which the Parliament emulated the profligacy of the court, — prostituting its own and the nation's honor as vilely as the royal mistresses it enriched had prostituted theirs: — "They have signed and sealed ten thousand pounds a year more to the Duchess of Cleveland, who has likewise near ten thousand pounds a year out of the new farm of the country excise of beer and ale, five thousand pounds a year out of the post-office, and, they say, the reversion of all the King's leases, the reversion of all places in the custom-house, the green wax, and indeed what not? All promotions, spiritual and temporal, pass under her cognizance." † On the King's unwelcome visits to the House of Peers, he says: "Being sat, he told them it was a privilege he claimed from his ancestors to be present at their deliberations. That therefore they should not, for his coming, interrupt their debates, but proceed, and be covered. They did so. It is true that this has been done long ago; but it is now so old that it is new, and so disused that, at any other but so bewitched a time as this, it would have been looked on as a high usurpation and breach of privilege. He indeed sat still, for the most part, and interposed very little, sometimes a word or two. . . . . . After three or four days' continuance, the Lords were very well used to the King's presence, and sent the Lord Steward and Lord Chamberlain to him [to learn], when they might wait, as a House on him, to render their humble thanks for the honor he did them! The hour was appointed them, and they thanked him, and he took it well. So this matter, of such importance on all great occasions, seems riveted to them and us, for the future, and to all posterity. . . . . The King has ever since continued his session among them, and *says it is better than going to a play.*" *

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 405.

† Ibid., p. 406.

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Marvell's stainless probity and honor everywhere appear; and in no case more amiably than in the misunderstanding with his colleague, or "his partner," as he calls him, Colonel Gilby, in 1661, and which seems to have arisen out of some electioneering proceedings. With such uncommon talents for ridicule as Marvell possessed, inferior men could not have resisted the temptation to indulge in some ebullition of witty malice. But his magnanimity was far superior to such mean retaliation. He is eager to do his opponent the amplest justice, and to put the fairest construction on his conduct. He is fearful only lest their private quarrel should be of the slightest detriment to the public service. He says: "The bonds of civility betwixt Colonel Gilby and myself being unhappily snapped in pieces, and in such manner that I cannot see how it is possible ever to knit them again: the only trouble that I have is, lest by our mis-intelligence your business should receive any disadvantage. . . . . . Truly, I believe, that as to your public trust and the discharge thereof, we do each of us still retain the same principles upon which we first undertook it; and that, though perhaps we may sometimes differ in our advice concerning the way of proceeding, yet we have the same good ends in the general; and by this unlucky falling out, we shall be provoked to a greater emulation of serving you." † Yet the offence, whatever it was, must have been a grave one, for we find him saying, at the conclusion of the same letter: "I would not tell you any tales, because there are nakednesses which it becomes us to cover, if it be possible; as I shall, unless I be obliged to make some vindications by any false report or misinterpretations.

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* Marvell's Letters, pp. 417 – 419.

† Ibid., pp. 33, 34.

In the mean time, pity, I beseech you, my weakness ; *for there are some things which men ought not, others that they cannot, patiently suffer.*" *

Of his integrity even in little things, — of his desire to keep his conscience pure and his reputation untarnished, — we have also some striking proofs. On one occasion he had been employed by his constituents to wait on the Duke of Monmouth, then governor of Hull, with a complimentary letter, and to present him with a purse containing " six broad pieces " as an honorary fee. He says : " He had, before I came in, as I was told, considered what to do with the gold ; and but that I by all means prevented the offer, I had been in danger of being reimbursed with it." † In the same letter he says : " I received the bill which was sent me on Mr. Nelehorpe ; but the surplus of it exceeding much the expense I have been at on this occasion, I desire you to make use of it, and of me, upon any other opportunity." ‡ Few in those corrupt days were likely to be troubled with any such inconvenient scrupulosity.

In one of his letters appears the following declaration, which we have no doubt was perfectly sincere, and, what is still more strange, implicitly believed : — " I shall, God willing, maintain the same incorrupt mind and clear conscience, free from faction or any self-ends, which I have, by his grace, hitherto preserved." §

We have said that these letters are also interesting as incidentally illustrating Parliamentary usage. Marvell was one of the last, — if not the very last, — who received the " wages " which members were entitled by law to demand of their constituents. To this subject he makes some curious references. On more than one occasion it appears, that members had sued their constituents for arrears of pay ; while others had threatened to do so, unless the said constituents agreed to reëlect them at the next election! "To-day," says he in a letter dated March 3, 1676-7, "Sir Harbottle Grimstone, Master of the Rolls, moved for a bill to be brought in, to indemnify all counties, cities, and boroughs for the *wages due to their members for the time past*, which was introduced by him upon very good reason; both because of the poverty of many people not able to supply so long an arrear, especially new taxes now coming upon them, and also because Sir John Shaw, the Recorder of Colchester, *had sued the town for his wages;* several other members also having, it seems, threatened their boroughs to do the same, unless *they should choose them*, upon another election, to Parliament." * The conditions of reëlection are strangely altered now; it is no longer possible to drive so thrifty a bargain, or bribe after so ingenious a fashion. But these "wages," moderate as they were, — only about two shillings a day to a member of a borough, and to a county member four, — were in some cases alleged to be so heavy a tax, that instances occur of unpatriotic boroughs begging to be *disfranchised*, to escape the intolerable honor of sending members to Parliament! Nor was the reluctance always on one side. At earlier periods of our history, we have accounts of members who, notwithstanding this liberal pay, — not much more than that of a hedger and ditcher in these more luxurious days, — found the inconveniences of membership so great, and the honor in their unambitious estimate so small, that they shrank from representing a borough, as much as the borough from the dignity of being represented; and expressed their aversion with as much sincerity as ever primitive bishop, in times of persecution, cried, "*Nolo episcopari.*" There are authentic cases on record, in which the candidates fairly ran away from the proffered dignity, and even resisted it *vi et armis*. Strange revolutions! one is ready to exclaim; — that a man should now be willing to spend a fortune even in the unsuccessful pursuit of an honor which his ancestors were reluctant to receive even when paid for it; and that constituencies should resist, as the last insult and degradation, that disfranchisement which many of them in ancient times would have been but too happy to accept as a privilege!

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 36.

† Ibid., p. 210.

‡ Ibid., p. 210.

§ Ibid., p. 276.

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 289.

In such a state of things we can hardly wonder, that the attendance of members was not very prompt and punctual, or that great difficulty was often found in obtaining a full House. Severe penalties were threatened at various times against the absentees. In one letter we are told: "The House was called yesterday, and gave defaulters a fortnight's time, by which, if they do not come up, they may expect the greatest severity." * In another: "The House of Commons was taken up for the most part yesterday in calling over their House, and have ordered a letter to be drawn up from the Speaker to every place for which there is any defaulter, to signify the absence of their member, and a solemn letter is accordingly preparing, to be signed by the Speaker. This is thought a sufficient punishment for *any modest man;* nevertheless, if they shall not come up hereupon, there is a further severity reserved." †

More than once we find a proposition, that these absentees should be punished by being compelled to pay double proportions toward the interminable subsidies. One member proposed that the mulcts thus extorted from negligent or idle senators, should be exclusively employed in building a ship, to be called "The Sinner's Frigate," — surely an ill-boding name, however applicable to such a vessel: —

> "Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark."

Though the law-makers of that age were paid at little more than the rate of a journeyman tailor of modern times, still it appears that their performances, if estimated by their value, were exorbitantly overpaid. When we see in Marvell's correspondence what were the occupations of the right honorable House, — shamefully betraying the nation with whose interests they were intrusted, — taxing the groaning people to support the royal profligacy, — ingeniously contriving the most elaborate and comprehensive methods of national ruin, and pursuing the worst ends by the worst means, — diminishing, by their absurd enactments in relation to trade and commerce, that very revenue which was almost their sole object of solicitude, — addressing the King, that he will be pleased to abstain from wearing one shred of foreign manufacture, and to discountenance the use of it in his subjects, — bringing in bills that all nonconformists shall pay double taxes, and that all persons shall be buried in woollens "for the next six or seven years"; — when we see them engaged with pernicious industry in these and other things of a similar nature, we cannot forbear lifting up our hands in admiration of the "wisdom of our ancestors."

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 117.

† Ibid., p. 240.

Some strange scenes appear now and then to have occurred in the Commons, and worthy rather of an Arkansas House of Assembly than of a British Parliament; of which the following is an example. As usual in such squabbles, the "Pickwickian construction" of all offensive words seems to have prevailed at last. "One day, upon a dispute of telling right upon division, both parties grew so hot that all order was lost; men came running up confusedly to the table, grievously affronted one by another; every man's hand on his hilt, quieted though at last by the prudence of the Speaker; every man in his place being obliged to stand up and engage his honor not to resent any thing of that day's proceeding." *

The disputes with the House of Lords were frequent, and difficult of adjustment. The following is a droll complication of their relations, and almost as hopeless as the cele-

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 426.

brated "dead-lock" in the "Critic": — "I have no more time than to tell you, that the Lords, having judged and fined the East India Company, as we think *illegally*, upon the petition of one Skyner, a merchant, and they petitioning us for redress, we have imprisoned him that petitioned *them*, and they have imprisoned several of those that petitioned *us*. . . . . . It is a business of very high and dangerous consequence."*

In a letter to William Ramsden, Esq., occurs another specimen of the awkward relations between the two Houses: — "I think I have not told you that, on our bill of subsidy, the Lord Lucas made a fervent bold speech against our prodigality in giving, and the weak looseness of the government, the King being present; and the Lord Clare another, to persuade the King that he ought not to be present. But all this had little encouragement, not being seconded. Copies going about everywhere, one of them was brought into the Lords' House, and Lord Lucas was asked whether it was his. He said, part was and part was not. Thereupon they took advantage, and said it was a libel even against Lucas himself. On this they voted it a libel, and to be burned by the hangman, which was done; but the sport was, the hangman burned the Lords' order with it. I take the last quarrel betwixt us and the Lords to be as the ashes of that speech." †

One or two other brief extracts from these letters seem not unworthy of insertion. The following is a curious example of the odd accidents on which important events often depend. Sir G. Carteret had been charged with embezzlement of public money. "The House dividing upon the question, the ayes went out, and wondered why they were kept out so extraordinary a time; the ayes proved 138, and the noes 129; and the reason of the long stay then appeared: — The tellers for the ayes chanced to be very ill reckoners, so that they were forced to tell several times over in the House; and when at last the tellers for the ayes would have agreed the noes to be 142, the noes would needs say that they were 143; whereupon those for the ayes would tell once more, and then found the noes to be indeed but 129, and the ayes then coming in proved to be 138, whereas if the noes had been content with the first error of the tellers, Sir George had been quit upon that observation." *

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* Marvell's Letters, p. 106. † Ibid., p. 416.

The following sounds odd: — "Yesterday, upon complaint of some violent arrests made in several churches, even during sermon time, nay, of one taken out betwixt the bread and the cup in receiving the sacrament, the House ordered that a bill be brought in for *better* observing the Lord's Day." †

Not seldom, to the very moderate "wages" of a legislator, was added some homely expression of good-will on the part of the constituents. That of the Hull people generally appeared in the shape of a stout cask of ale, for which Marvell repeatedly returns thanks. In one letter he says: "We must first give you thanks for the kind present you have pleased to send us, which will give occasion to us to remember you often: but the quantity is so great that it might make sober men forgetful." ‡

Marvell's correspondence extends through nearly twenty years. From June, 1661, there is, however, a considerable break, owing to his absence for an unknown period, — probably about two years, — in Holland. He showed little disposition to return till Lord Bellasis, then High Steward of Hull, proposed to that worthy corporation to choose a substitute for their absent member. They replied that he was not far off, and would be ready at their summons. He was then at Frankfort, and at the solicitation of his constituents immeately returned, April, 1663.

But he had not been more than three months at home, when he intimated to his correspondents his intention to accept an invitation to accompany Lord Carlisle, who had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to Russia, Sweden, and Denmark. He formally solicits the assent of his constituents to this step, urges the precedents for it, and assures them that, during his watchful colleague's attendance, his own services may be dispensed with. His constituents consented. He sailed in July, and appears to have been absent rather more than a year. We find him in his place in the Parliament that assembled at Oxford, 1665.

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* Marvell's Letters, pp. 125, 126.

† Ibid., p. 189.

‡ Ibid., pp. 14, 15.

In 1671, for some unknown reason, there is another *hiatus* in his correspondence. It extends over three years. From 1674, the letters are regularly continued till his death. There is no proof that he ever spoke in Parliament; but it appears that he took copious notes of all the debates.

The decisive tone which Marvell ever assumed in politics, — the severe, satirical things which he had said and written from time to time, — and the conviction of his enemies, that it was impossible to silence him by the usual methods of a place or a bribe, must have rendered a wary and circumspect conduct peculiarly necessary; and, in fact, we are told that on more than one occasion he was menaced with assassination. But, though hated by the Court party generally, he was as generally feared, and in some few instances respected. Prince Rupert continued to honor him with his friendship long after the rest of the Court party had honored him with their hatred, and occasionally visited the patriot at his lodgings. When he voted on the side of Marvell, which was not unfrequently the case, it used to be said that "he had been with his tutor."

Inaccessible as Marvell was to flattery and offers of preferment, it certainly was not for want of temptations. The account of his memorable interview with the Lord Treasurer Danby has been often repeated, and yet it would be unpardonable to omit it here. Marvell, it appears, once spent an evening at Court, and charmed the merry monarch by his accomplishments and wit. At this we need not wonder: Charles loved wit above all things — except vice; and to his admiration of it he was continually sacrificing his royal dignity. On the morning after the above-mentioned interview, he sent Lord Danby to wait on the patriot with a special message of regard. His Lordship had some difficulty in ferreting out Marvell's residence ; but at last found him on a second floor, in a dark court leading out of the Strand. It is said that, groping up the narrow staircase, he stumbled against the door of Marvell's humble apartment, which, flying open, discovered him writing. Not a little surprised, he asked his Lordship, with a smile, if he had not mistaken his way. The latter replied, in courtly phrase, "No ; since I have found Mr. Marvell." He proceeded to inform him that he came with a message from the King, who was impressed with a deep sense of his merits, and was anxious to serve him. Marvell replied, with somewhat of the spirit of the founder of the Cynics, but no doubt in a very different manner, "that his Majesty had it not in his power to serve him." * Becoming more serious, however, he told his Lordship that he well knew that he who accepted Court favors was expected to vote in his interest. On his Lordship's saying, "that his Majesty only desired to know whether there was any place at Court he would accept," the patriot replied, "that he could accept nothing with honor ; for either he must treat the king with ingratitude, by refusing compliance with Court measures, or be a traitor to his country by yielding to them."

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* Another and less authentic version of this anecdote has been long current, much more circumstantial, indeed, but on that very account more apocryphal. If the too dramatic additions to the story, however, be fictions, they are amongst those fictions which have gained extensive circulation only because they are felt to be not intrinsically improbable. Some pains have been taken to investigate the origin of this version ; but we can trace it no further than to a pamphlet printed in Ireland about the middle of the last century. Of this we have not been so fortunate as to get a sight. Suffice it to say, that the narrative it contains of the above interview, and which has been extensively circulated, is not borne out by the early biographies ; for example, that of Cooke, 1726.

The only favor, therefore, he begged of his Majesty was, to esteem him as a loyal subject, and truer to his interests in *refusing* his offers than he could be by *accepting* them. His Lordship, having exhausted this species of logic, tried the *argumentum ad crumenam*, and told him that his Majesty requested his acceptance of £1,000. But this, too, was rejected with firmness; "though," says his biographer, "soon after the departure of his Lordship, Marvell was compelled to borrow a guinea from a friend."

In 1672 commenced Marvell's memorable controversy with Samuel Parker, afterwards Bishop of Oxford, of which we shall give a somewhat copious account. To this it is entitled, from the important influence which it had on Marvell's reputation and fortunes; and as having led to the composition of that work on which his literary fame, so far as he has any, principally depends, — "The Rehearsal Transprosed."

Parker was one of the worst specimens of the highest of the high-churchmen of the reign of Charles II. It is difficult, in such times as these, to conceive of such a character as, by universal testimony, Parker is proved to have been. Even Addison's Tory fox-hunter — who thought there had been "no good weather since the Revolution," and who proceeded to descant on the "fine days they used to have in King Charles II.'s reign"; whose dog was chiefly endeared to him because he had once "like to have worried a Dissenting teacher"; and who "had no other notion of religion but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians" — does not adequately represent him. Such men could not well flourish in any other age than that of Charles II.; happily the race, even then not numerous, could not propagate itself. Only in such a period of unblushing profligacy, — of public corruption unexampled in the history of England, — could we expect to find a Bishop Parker, and his patron and parallel, Archbishop Sheldon. Such men managed to combine the most hideous bigotry with an absence of all religious earnestness, — a zeal worthy of a "Pharisee" with a character which would have disgraced a "publican." Apparently as much attached to the veriest minutiæ of high-church orthodoxy as the sincerest disciples of the present Oxford school, they yet gave reason to their very friends to doubt whether they did not secretly despise even the cardinal doctrines of Christianity.* Equivocal Christians in creed, and absolute infidels in practice, they yet insisted on the most scrupulous compliance with the most trivial points of ceremonial; and persisted in persecuting thousands of devout and honest men because they hesitated to obey. Things which they admitted to be indifferent, and which, without violation of conscience, they might have forborne to enforce, they remorselessly urged on those who solemnly declared that without such a violation they could not comply. More tolerant of acknowledged vice than of supposed error, they deemed drunkenness and debauchery venial, compared with doubts about the propriety of making the sign of the cross in baptism, or using the ring in marriage; it would have been better for a man to break half the commands in the decalogue, than admit a doubt of the most frivolous of their cherished rites. Equally truculent and servile, they displayed to all above them a meanness proportioned to the insolence they evinced to all below them. While preferring, on behalf of the Church, the most extravagant pretensions, they were far from participating in any jealousy of the state, which they were ready to arm with the most despotic authority. They formally invested the monarch with absolute power over the consciences of his subjects; and, with a practice in harmony with their principles, were ready at any moment to surrender their own, — if they had had any. As far as appears, they would have been willing to embrace the faith of Mahometans or Hindoos at the bidding of his Majesty; and to believe and disbelieve as he commanded them. Extravagant as all this may seem, we shall shortly see it gravely propounded by Parker himself. It was fit that those who were willing to offer such vile adulation should be suffered to present it to such an object as Charles II., — that so grotesque an idolatry should have as grotesque an idol. The god was, indeed, every way worthy of the worshippers. In a word, these men seemed to reconcile the most opposite vices and the widest contrarieties: bigotry and laxity, — pride and meanness, — religious scrupulosity and mocking scepticism, — a persecuting zeal against conscience and an indulgent latitudinarianism towards vice, — the truculence of tyrants, and the sycophancy of parasites.

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* Of Sheldon, Bishop Burnet says, that "he seems not to have had any clear sense of religion, if any at all." Of Parker, he speaks yet more strongly. But, perhaps, the most striking testimony is that of the Jesuit father, Edward Petre, cited by Mr. Dove. He says: "The Bishop of Oxford has not yet declared himself openly: the great obstacle is his *wife*, whom he cannot rid himself of: though I do not see how he can be further useful to us in the religion he is in, because he is suspected, and of no esteem among the heretics of the English Church. . . . . . If he had believed my counsel, which was to *temporize* for some *longer time*, he would have done better." Surely this Jesuit and his pupil were well matched for honesty.

Happily the state of things which generated such men has long since passed away. But examples of this sort of high-churchmanship were not infrequent in the age of Charles II.; and perhaps Bishop Parker may be considered the most perfect specimen of them. His father was one of Oliver Cromwell's most obsequious committee-men; the son, who was born in 1640, was brought up in the principles of the Puritans, and was sent to Oxford in 1659. He was just twenty at the Restoration, and immediately commenced and soon completed his transformation into one of the most arrogant and timeserving of high-churchmen.

Some few propositions, for which he came earnestly to contend as "for the faith once delivered to the saints," may give an idea of the principles and the temper of this singular successor of the Apostles. He affirms, "That unless princes have power to bind their subjects to that religion they apprehend most advantageous to public peace and tranquillity, and restrain those religious mistakes that tend to its subversion, they are no better than statues and images of authority: — That in cases and disputes of public concernment, private men are not properly *sui juris;* they have no power over their own actions; they are not to be directed by their own judgments, or determined by their own wills, but by the commands and the determinations of the public conscience; and that if there be any sin in the command, he that imposed it shall answer for it, and not I, whose whole duty it is to obey. The commands of authority will warrant my obedience; my obedience will hallow, or at least excuse, my action, and so secure me from sin, if not from error; and in all doubtful and disputable cases 't is better to err with authority, than to be in the right against it: — That it is absolutely necessary to the peace and happiness of kingdoms, that there be set up a more severe government over men's consciences and religious persuasions than over their vices and immoralities; and that princes may with less hazard give liberty to men's vices and debaucheries than their consciences." *

He must have a very narrow mind or uncharitable heart, who cannot give poor human nature credit for the sincere adoption of the most opposite opinions. Still there are limits to this exercise of charity; there may be such a concurrence of suspicious symptoms, that our charity can be exercised only at the expense of our common sense. We can easily conceive, under ordinary circumstances, of Dissenters becoming Churchmen, and Churchmen becoming Dissenters; Tories and Whigs changing sides; Protestants and Romanists, like those two brothers mentioned in Locke's second "Letter on Toleration," † so expert in logic as to convert one another, and then, unhappily, not expert enough to convert one another back again, — and all without any suspicion of insincerity. But when great revolutions of opinion are also very sudden, and exquisitely well-timed in relation to private interest; when these changes, let them be what they may, are always like those of the heliotrope, towards the sun; when a man is utterly uncharitable even to his own previous errors, and foully maligns and abuses all who still retain them, — it is impossible to doubt the motives which have animated him. On this subject Marvell himself well observes: "Though a man be obliged to change a hundred times backward and forward, if his judgment be so weak and variable, yet there are some drudgeries that no man of honor would put himself upon, and but few submit to if they were imposed; as, — suppose one had thought fit to pass over from one persuasion of the Christian religion into another, he would not choose to spit thrice at every article that he relinquished, to curse solemnly his father and mother for having educated him in those opinions, to animate his new acquaintances to the massacring of his former comrades. These are businesses that can only be expected from a renegade of Algiers and Tunis; — to overdo in expiation, and gain better credence of being a sincere Mussulman." *

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* The Rehearsal Transprosed, Vol. I. pp. 97, 98, 99, 100, 101.

† Locke's Works, Vol. V. p. 79.

Marvell gives an amusing account of the progress of Parker's conversion, — of the transformation by which the maggot became a carrion-fly. In the second part of the "Rehearsal," after a humorous description of his parentage and youth, he tells us that at the Restoration "he came to London, where he spent a considerable time in creeping into all corners and companies, horoscoping up and down" ("astrologizing" as he elsewhere expresses it) "concerning the duration of the government; — not considering any thing as *best*, but as *most lasting* and *most profitable*: and after having many times cast a figure, he at last satisfied himself that the Episcopal government would endure as long as this King lived, and from thenceforward cast about how to be admitted into the Church of England, and find the highway to her preferments. In order to do this, he daily enlarged, not only his conversation, but his conscience, and was made free of some of the town vices; imagining, like Mulcasses, King of Tunis, (for I take witness that on all occasions I treat him rather above his quality than otherwise,) that, by hiding himself among the onions, he should escape being traced by his perfumes." * Marvell sketches the early history and character of Parker in both parts of the "Rehearsal," — though, as might be expected, with greater severity in the second than in the first. A few sentences may not displease the reader. He says: —

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* Rehearsal Transprosed, Vol. I. pp. 91, 92.

"This gentleman, as I have heard, after he had read Don Quixote and the Bible, besides such school-books as were necessary for his age, was sent early to the university; and there studied hard, and in a short time became a competent rhetorician, and no ill disputant. He had learned how to erect a *thesis*, and to defend it *pro* and *con* with a serviceable distinction. . . . . And so, thinking himself now ripe and qualified for the greatest undertakings and highest fortune, he therefore exchanged the narrowness of the university for the town; but coming out of the confinement of the square cap and the quadrangle into the open air, the world began to turn round with him, which he imagined, though it were his own giddiness, to be nothing less than the quadrature of the circle. This accident concurring so happily to increase the good opinion which he naturally had of himself, he thenceforward applied to gain a like reputation with others. He followed the town life, haunted the best companies; and, to polish himself from any pedantic roughness, he read and saw the plays with much care, and more proficiency than most of the auditory. But all this while he forgot not the main chance; but hearing of a vacancy with a nobleman, he clapped in, and easily obtained to be his chaplain: from that day you may take the date of his preferments and his ruin; for having soon wrought himself dexterously into his patron's favor, by short graces and sermons, and a mimical way of drolling upon the Puritans, which he knew would take both at chapel and at table, he gained a great authority likewise among all the domestics. They all listened to him as an oracle; and they allowed him, by common consent, to have not only all the divinity, but more wit, too, than all the rest of the family put together. . . . . Nothing now must serve him, but he must be a madman in print, and write a book of Ecclesiastical Polity. There he distributes all the territories of conscience into the prince's province, and makes the hierarchy to be but bishops of the air; and talks at such an extravagant rate in things of higher concernment, that the reader will avow that in the whole discourse he had not one lucid interval." *

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* Rehearsal Transprosed, Vol. II. pp. 77, 78.

The work here mentioned, the "Ecclesiastical Polity," was published in the year 1670. But the book which called forth Marvell was a Preface to a posthumous work of Archbishop Bramhall's, which appeared in 1672. In this piece Parker had displayed his usual zeal against the nonconformists, with more than usual acrimony, and pushed to the uttermost extravagance his favorite maxims of ecclesiastical tyranny. Like his previous works on similar matters, it was anonymous, though the author was pretty well known. Marvell dubs him "Mr. Bayes," under which name the Duke of Buckingham had ridiculed Dryden in the well-known play of "The Rehearsal"; from the title of which Marvell designated his book, "The Rehearsal Transprosed." The latter word was suggested by the scene in which Mr. Bayes gives an account of the manner in which he manufactured his plays: "*Bayes.* — Why, sir, my first rule is the rule of transversion, or *regula duplex*, — changing verse into prose, or prose into verse, *alternativè*, as you please. *Smith.* — Well, but how is this done by rule, sir? *Bayes.* — Why thus, sir; nothing so easy when understood. I take a book in my hand, either at home or elsewhere, for that 's all one: if there be any wit in 't, as there is no book but has some, I *transverse* it; that is, if it be prose put it into verse, (but that takes up some time,) and if it be verse put it into prose. *Johnson.* — Methinks, Mr. Bayes, that putting verse into prose should be called *transprosing*. *Bayes.* — By my troth, sir, it is a very good notion, and hereafter it shall be so."

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* Rehearsal Transprosed, Vol I. pp. 62-69.

The success of the "Rehearsal" was instant and signal. "After Parker had for some years entertained the nation with several virulent books," says Burnet, "he was attacked by the liveliest droll of the age, who wrote in a burlesque strain, but with so peculiar and entertaining a conduct, that, from the King down to the tradesman, his books were read with great pleasure: that not only humbled Parker, but the whole party; for the author of the 'Rehearsal Transprosed' had all the men of wit (or, as the French phrase it, all the *laughers*) on his side."

In fact, Marvell exhibited his adversary in so ridiculous a light, that even his own party could not keep their countenances. The unhappy churchman resembled Gulliver at the court of Brobdignag, when the mischievous page stuck him into the marrow-bone. He cut such a ridiculous figure, that, says the author just cited, even the King and his courtiers could not help laughing at him.

The first part of the "Rehearsal" elicited several answers. They were written for the most part in very unsuccessful imitation of Marvell's style of banter, and are now wholly forgotten. Marvell gives an amusing account of the efforts which were made to obtain effective replies, and of the hopes of preferment which may be supposed to have inspired their authors. Parker himself for some time declined any reply. At last came out his "Reproof to the Rehearsal Transprosed," in which he urged the government "to *crush the pestilent wit*, the servant of Cromwell, and the friend of Milton." To this work, Marvell replied in the second part of the "Rehearsal." He was further spirited to it by an anonymous letter, pleasant and laconic enough, left for him at a friend's house, signed "T. G.," and concluding with the words: "If thou darest to print any lie or libel against Dr. Parker, by the eternal God, I will cut thy throat!" He who wrote it, whoever he was, was ignorant of Marvell's nature, if he thought thereby to intimidate him into silence. His intrepid spirit was simply provoked by this insolent threat, which he took care to publish in the title-page of his Reply. To this publication Parker attempted no rejoinder. Anthony Wood himself tells us, that Parker "judged it more prudent to lay down the cudgels, than to enter the lists again with an untowardly combatant, so hugely well versed and experienced in the then but newly refined art, though much in the mode and fashion ever since, of sporting and jeering buffoonery. It was generally thought, however, by many of those who were otherwise favorers of Parker's cause, that the victory lay on Marvell's side, and it wrought this good effect on Parker, that for ever after it took down his great spirit": and Burnet tells us, that he "withdrew from the town, and ceased writing for some years."

Of this, the principal work of Marvell's singular genius, it is difficult, even were there space for it, to present the reader with any considerable extracts. The allusions are often so obscure, — the wit of one page is so dependent on that of another, — the humor and pleasantry are so continuous, — and the character of the work, from its very nature, is so excursive, that its merits can be appreciated only on a regular perusal. There are other reasons, too, which render lengthened citations scarcely practicable. The composition has faults which would inevitably disgust the generality of modern readers, or rather deter them altogether from giving any long extracts a continuous perusal. The work is also characterized by not a little of the coarseness which was so prevalent in that age, and from which Marvell was by no means free; though, as we shall endeavor hereafter to show, his spirit was far from partaking of the malevolence of ordinary satirists. Some few instances of felicitous repartee or ludicrous imagery, which we have noted in a reperusal of the work, will be found further on.

Yet the reader must not infer that the sole, or even the chief, merit of the "Rehearsal Transprosed" consists in wit and banter. Not only is there, amidst all its ludicrous levities, "a vehemence of solemn reproof, and an eloquence of invective, that awes one with the spirit of the modern Junius";* but there are many passages of very powerful reasoning, in advocacy of truths which were then but ill understood, and of rights which had been shamefully violated.

Perhaps the most interesting passages of the work are those in which Marvell refers to his great friend, John Milton. Parker, with his customary malignity, had insinuated that the poet, who was then living in cautious retirement, might have been the author of the "Rehearsal," — apparently with the view of turning the indignation of government upon the illustrious recluse. Marvell had always entertained towards Milton a feeling of reverence akin to idolatry, and this stroke of deliberate malice was more than he could bear. He generously hastened to throw his shield over his aged and prostrate patron.

About three years after the publication of the second part of the "Rehearsal," Marvell's chivalrous love of justice impelled him again to draw the sword. In 1675, Dr. Croft, Bishop of Hereford, had published a work entitled, "The Naked Truth, or the True State of the Primitive Church, by a Humble Moderator." This work deserved the character of that sermon which Corporal Trim shook out of the volume of Stevinus. "If you have no objections," said Mr. Shandy to Dr. Slop, "Trim shall read it." "Not in the least," replied Dr. Slop, "for it does not appear on which side of the question it is wrote; it may be a composition of a divine of *our* church, as well as of *yours*, so that we run equal risks." "'T is wrote upon *neither* side," quoth Trim, "for it is *only* upon conscience, an' please your honors." Even so was it with the good bishop's little piece. It was written on neither side. It enjoined on all religious parties the unwelcome duties of forbearance and charity; but as it especially exposed the danger and folly of enforcing a minute uniformity, it could not be suffered to pass unchallenged in that age of high-church intolerance. It was petulantly attacked by Dr. Francis Turner, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, in a pamphlet entitled, "Animadversions on the Naked Truth." This provoked our satirist, who replied in a pamphlet entitled, "Mr. Smirke, or the Divine in Mode." He here fits his antagonist with a character out of Etherege's "Man of Mode," — as he had before fitted Parker with one from Buckingham's "Rehearsal." The merits and defects of this pamphlet are of much the same order as those of his former work, — it is perhaps less disfigured by coarseness and vehemence. Of Dr. Croft's pamphlet, he beautifully expresses a feeling, of which we imagine few can have been unconscious when perusing any work which strongly appeals to our reason and conscience, and in which, as we proceed, we seem to recognize what we have often thought, but never uttered. "It is a book of that kind, that no Christian can peruse it without wishing himself to have been the author, and almost imagining that he is so; the conceptions therein being of so eternal an idea, that every man finds it to be but a copy of the original in his own mind."

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* D'Israeli.

To this *brochure* was attached "A Short Historical Essay concerning General Councils, Creeds, and Impositions in Matters of Religion." It is characterized by the same strong sense and untiring vivacity as his other writings, and evinces a creditable acquaintance with ecclesiastical history; but it is neither copious nor profound enough for the subject.

In 1677, Marvell published his last controversial piece, elicited like the rest by his disinterested love of fair play. It was a defence of the celebrated divine, John Howe, whose conciliatory tract on the "Divine Prescience" had been rudely assailed by three several antagonists. This little volume, which is throughout in Marvell's vein, is now extremely scarce. It is not included in any edition of his works, and appears to have been unknown to all his biographers.

His last work of any extent was entitled, "An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England." It first appeared in 1678. It is written with much vigor, — boldly vindicates the great principles of the constitution, — and discusses the limits of the royal prerogative. The gloomy anticipations expressed by the author were but too well justified by the public events which transpired subsequently to his death. But the worst consequences of the principles and policy he denounced, were happily averted by the Revolution of 1688.

A reward was offered by the government for the discovery of the author of this "libel," as it was pleasantly designated. Marvell seems to have taken the matter very coolly, and thus humorously alludes to the subject, in a private letter to Mr. Ramsden, dated June 10, 1678: "There came out about Christmas last, here, a large book concerning the growth of Popery and arbitrary government. There have been great rewards offered in private, and considerable in the Gazette, to any one who could inform of the author or printer, but not yet discovered. Three or four printed books since have described, as near as it was proper to go (the man being a member of Parliament), Mr. Marvell to have been the author; but if he had, surely he should not have escaped being questioned in Parliament, or some other place."

Marvell published, during the latter years of his life, several other political pamphlets, which, though now forgotten, were doubtless not without their influence in unmasking corruption, and rousing the nation to a consciousness of its political degradation. One *jeu d'esprit*, — a parody on the speeches of Charles II., — in which the flippancy and easy impudence of those singular specimens of royal eloquence are happily mimicked and scarcely caricatured, is very characteristic of his caustic humor. A few sentences may not displease the reader.

> "I told you at our last meeting, the winter was the fittest time for business, and truly I thought so, till my lord-treasurer assured me the spring was the best season for salads and subsidies. . . . . Some of you, perhaps, will think it dangerous to make me too rich;

but I do not fear it, for I promise you faithfully, whatever you give me, I will always want; and, although in other things my word may be thought a slender authority, yet in that, you may rely on me, I will never break it. . . . . . I can bear my straits with patience; but my lord-treasurer does protest to me that the revenue, as it now stands, will not serve him and me too. One of us must pinch for it, if you do not help me. . . . . . What shall we do for ships then? I hint this only to you, it being your business, not mine. I know by experience I can live without ships. I lived ten years abroad without, and never had my health better in my life; but how *you* will be without, I will leave to yourselves to judge, and therefore hint this only by the by. I don't insist upon it. There is another thing I must press more earnestly, and that is this: it seems a good part of my revenue will expire in two or three years, except you will be pleased to continue it. I have to say for it, — Pray, why did you give me so much as you have done, unless you resolve to give on as fast as I call for it? The nation hates you already for giving so much, and I will hate you too if you do not give me more. So that, if you do not stick to me, you will not have a friend in England. . . . . . Therefore look to it, and take notice, that if you do not make me rich enough to undo you, it shall lie at your door. For my part I wash my hands on it. . . . . . I have converted my natural sons from Popery. . . . . . 'T would do one's heart good to hear how prettily George can read already in the psalter. They are all fine children, God bless 'em, and so like me in their understandings! But, as I was saying, I have, to please you, given a pension to your favorite, my Lord Lauderdale, not so much that I thought he wanted it, as that you would take it kindly. . . . . . I know not, for my part, what factious men would have; but this I am sure of, my predecessors never did any thing like this to gain the good-will of their subjects. So much for your religion, and now for your property. . . . . . I must now acquaint you, that, by my lord-treasurer's advice, I have made a considerable retrenchment upon my expenses in candles and charcoal, and do not intend to stop; but will, with your help, look into the late embezzlements of my dripping-pans and kitchen-stuff, of which, by the way, upon my conscience, neither my lord-treasurer nor my Lord Lauderdale are guilty." *

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* Marvell's Works, Vol. I. pp. 428, 429.

Marvell's intrepid patriotism and bold writings had now made him so odious to the corrupt Court, and especially to the bigoted James, that he was compelled frequently to conceal himself, for fear of assassination. He makes an affecting allusion to this in one of his private letters. "*Magis occidere*," says he, "*metuo quam occidi; non quod vitam tanti æstimem, sed ne imparatus moriar.*" *

He died August 16, 1678, the year that his obnoxious work on the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government appeared; and, as he was in vigorous health just before, suspicions were entertained that he had been poisoned.

In person, according to the description of Aubrey, who knew him well, Marvell "was of a middling stature, pretty strong set, roundish-faced, cherry-cheeked, hazel-eyed, brown-haired. In his conversation he was modest, and of very few words. He was wont to say he would not drink high or freely with any one with whom he could not trust his life." Captain Thompson gives a somewhat different account of his complexion and the color of his eyes; but, as is often the case in more important points, he does not mention his authority. It seems probable that he has been giving us a description from the impression conveyed by his portraits (of which there are two), without allowing for the effects of time; so that we have but the picture of a picture.

Of the editions of Marvell's collected works, that of 1726, in two volumes duodecimo, contains only his poems and some of his private letters. That of Captain Thompson, in three volumes quarto, was published in 1776. Yet even this, as already said, omits one treatise. The Captain's diligence is indeed worthy of commendation, and his enthusiasm may be pardoned. But he was far from being a correct or judicious editor, and is often betrayed by his indiscriminate admiration into excessive and preposterous eulogy. The only separate biography is, we believe, the little volume mentioned at the head of this article.

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* Cooke's Life of Marvell, prefixed to his Poems, p. 14.

The characteristic attribute of Marvell's genius was unquestionably wit, in all the varieties of which — brief, sententious sarcasm, fierce invective, light raillery, grave irony, and broad, laughing humor — he seems to have been by nature almost equally fitted to excel. To say that he *has* equally excelled in all would be untrue, though striking examples of each might easily be selected from his writings. The activity with which his mind suggests ludicrous images and analogies is astonishing; he often positively startles us by the remoteness and oddity ofthe sources from which they are supplied, and by the unexpected ingenuity and felicity of his repartees.

His *forte*, however, appears to be a grave, ironical banter, which he often pursues at such a length that there seems no limit to his fertility of invention. In his accumulation of ludicrous images and allusions, — the untiring, exhaustive ridicule with which he will play upon the same topics, — he is unique; yet this peculiarity not seldom leads him to drain the generous wine even to the dregs; to spoil a series of felicitous railleries by some far-fetched conceit or unpardonable extravagance.

But though Marvell was so great a master of wit, and especially of that caustic species which is appropriate to satirists, he seems to have been singularly free from many of the faults which distinguish that irritable brotherhood. Unsparing and merciless as his ridicule is, contemptuous and ludicrous as are the lights in which he exhibits his opponent; nay, further, though his invectives are not only often terribly severe, but (in compliance with the spirit of the age) often grossly coarse and personal, it is still impossible to detect a single particle of malignity. His general tone is either that of broad, mirthful banter, or of the most cutting invective; but he appears equally devoid of malevolence in both. In the one, he seems amusing himself with opponents, for whom he has too much contempt to feel anger; in the other, to act with the stern, imperturbable gravity of one who is performing the unpleasant but necessary functions of a public executioner. This freedom from the usual faults of satirists may be traced to several causes; partly to the *bonhommie* which, with all his talents for satire, was a peculiar characteristic of the man, and which rendered him as little disposed to take offence, and as placable when it was offered, as any man of his time; partly to the integrity of his nature, which, while it prompted him to champion any cause in which justice had been outraged or innocence wronged, effectually preserved him from the wanton exercise of his wit for the gratification of malevolence; partly, perhaps principally, to the fact, that both the above qualities restricted him to encounters in which he had personally no concern. If he carried a keen sword, it was a most peaceable and gentlemanly weapon; it never left the scabbard except on the highest provocation, and, even then, only on behalf of others. His magnanimity, self-control, and good temper, restrained him from avenging any insult offered to himself; — his chivalrous love of justice instantly roused all the lion within him on behalf of the injured and oppressed. It is perhaps well for Marvell's fame that his quarrels were not personal: had they been so, it is hardly probable that such powers of sarcasm and irony should have been so little associated with bitterness of temper.

Nor let it be said, that this freedom from malignity in the exercise of his wit scarcely deserves much praise; for though it is true, that there is no necessary connection between that quality of mind and the malevolent passions (as numberless illustrious examples sufficiently prove), yet it offers great temptations to their indulgence, and is almost always combined with that constitutional irritability of genius which it so readily gratifies, and, by gratifying, transforms into something worse. Half the tendencies of our nature pass into habits only from the facilities which encourage their development. Quarrels were infinitely more frequent when all men were accustomed to wear arms; and, similarly, many a waspish temper has become so, principally from being in possession of the weapon of satire. Not seldom, too, it must be sorrowfully admitted, the most exquisite sense of the ridiculous has been strangely combined with a morbid, saturnine temperament, which looks on all things with a jaundiced imagination, and surveys human infirmities and foibles with feelings not more remote from those of compassionate benevolence than of genuine mirth. Happy when, as in the case of Cowper, the influence of a benign heart and unfeigned humility prevents this tendency from degenerating into universal malevolence. There are few things more shockingly incongruous than the ghastly union of wit and misanthropy. Wit should be ever of open brow, joyous, and frank-hearted. Even the severest satire may be delicious reading when penned with the *bonhommie* of Horace or of Addison, or the equanimity of Plato or of Pascal. Without pretending that Marvell had aught of the elegance or the delicacy of any of these immortal writers, we firmly believe he had as much kindly feeling as any of them. Unhappily the two by no means go together; there may be the utmost refinement without a particle of good-nature; and a great deal of good-nature without any refinement. It were easy to name writers, who, with the most exquisite grace of diction, can as little disguise the malice of their nature, as Marvel, with all his coarseness, can make us doubt his benevolence. Through the veil of their language (of beautiful texture, but too transparent) we see chagrin poorly stimulating mirth; anger struggling to appear contempt, and failing; malevolence writhing itself into an aspect of ironical courtesy, but with grim distortion in the attempt; and sarcasms urged by the impulses which, under different circumstances, and in another country, would have prompted to the use of the stiletto.

It is impossible, indeed, not to regret the coarseness, often amounting to buffoonery, of Marvell's wit; though, from the consideration just urged, we regard it with the more forbearance. Other palliations have been pleaded for him, derived from the character of his adversaries, the haste with which he wrote, and the spirit of the age. The last is the strongest. The tomahawk and the scalping-knife were not yet discreditable weapons, or thrown aside as fit only for savage warfare; and it is even probable that many of the things which we should regard as gross insults then passed as pardonable jests. It is difficult for us, of course, to imagine that callousness which scarcely thinks any thing an insult but what is enforced by the *argumentum baculinum.* Between the feelings of our forefathers and our own, there seems to have been as great a difference as between those of the farmer and the clergyman, so ludicrously described by Cowper in his "Yearly Distress": —

> "O, why are farmers made so coarse,
> Or clergy made so fine?
> A kick that scarce would move a horse
> May kill a sound divine."

The haste with which Marvell wrote must also be pleaded as an excuse for the inequalities of his works. It was not the age in which authors elaborated and polished with care, or submitted with a good grace to the *limæ labor;* and if it had been, Marvell allowed himself no leisure for the task. The second part of the "Rehearsal," for example, was published in the same year in which Parker's "Reproof" appeared. We must profess our belief that no small portion of his writings stand in great need of this apology. Exhibiting, as they do, amazing vigor and fertility, the wit is by no means always of the first order.

We must not quit the subject of his wit, without presenting the reader with some few of his pleasantries; premising that they form but a very small part of those which we had marked in the perusal of his works; and that, whatever their merit, it were easy to find many others fully equal to them, if we could afford space for citation.

Ironically bewailing the calamitous effects of printing, our author exclaims: "O Printing! how hast thou disturbed the peace of mankind! Lead, when moulded into bullets, is not so mortal as when founded into letters. There was a mistake, sure, in the story of Cadmus; and the serpents' teeth which he sowed were nothing else but the letters which he invented." Parker having declared, in relation to some object of his scurrility, that he had written, "not to impair his esteem, but to correct his scribbling humor," Marvell says: "Our author is as courteous as lightning, and can melt the sword without ever hurting the scabbard." After alleging that his opponent often has a by-play of malignity even when bestowing commendations, he remarks: "The author's end was only railing. He could never have induced himself to praise one man but in order to rail on another. He never oils his hone but that he may whet his razor, and that not to shave, but to cut men's throats." On Parker's absurd and bombastic exaggeration of the merits and achievements of Bishop Bramhall, Marvell wittily says: "Any worthy man may pass through the world unquestioned and safe, with a moderate recommendation; but when he is thus set off and bedaubed with rhetoric, and embroidered so thick that you cannot discern the ground, it awakens naturally (and not altogether unjustly) interest, curiosity, and envy. For all men pretend a share in reputation, and love not to see it engrossed and monopolized; and are subject to inquire (as of great estates suddenly got) whether he came by all this honestly, or of what credit the person is that tells the story? And the same hath happened as to this bishop. . . . . . Men seeing him furbished up in so martial accoutrements, like another Odo, Bishop of Baieux, and having never before heard of his prowess, begin to reflect what giants he defeated, and what damsels he rescued. . . . . . After all our author's bombast, when we have searched all over, we find ourselves bilked in our expectation; and he hath created the bishop, like a St. Christopher in the popish churches, as big as ten porters, and yet only employed to sweat under the burden of an infant." Of the paroxysms of rage with which Parker refers to one of his adversaries, whom he distinguishes by his initials, Marvell says: "As oft as he does but name those two first letters, he is like the island of Fayal, on fire in threescore and ten places"; and affirms, "that if he were of that fellow's diet here about town, that epicurizes on burning coals, drinks healths in scalding brimstone, scranches the glasses for his dessert, and draws his breath through glowing tobacco-pipes, he could not show more flame than he always does upon that subject." Parker, in a passage of unequalled absurdity, having represented Geneva as on the south side of the Lake Leman, Marvell ingeniously represents the blunder as the subject of discussion in a private company, where various droll solutions are proposed, and where he, with exquisite irony, pretends to take Parker's part. "I," says Marvell, "that was still on the doubtful and excusing part, said, that, to give the right situation of a town, it was necessary first to know in what position the gentleman's head then was when he made his observation, and that might cause a great diversity, — as much as this came to." Having charged his adversary with needlessly obtruding upon the world some petty matters which concerned only himself, from an exaggerated idea of his own importance, Marvell drolly says: "When a man is once possessed with this fanatic kind of spirit, he imagines, if a shoulder do but itch, that the world has galled it with leaning on it so long, and therefore he wisely shrugs to remove the globe to the other. If he chance but to sneeze, he salutes himself, and courteously prays that the foundations of the earth be not shaken. And even so the author of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' ever since he crept up to be but the weathercock of a steeple, trembles and creaks at every puff of wind that blows him about, as if the Church of England were falling, and the state tottered." After ludicrously describing the effect of the first part of the "Rehearsal" in exacerbating all his opponent's evil passions, he remarks: "He seems not so fit at present for the archdeacon's seat, as to take his place below in the church amongst the *energumeni*." Parker had charged him with a sort of plagiarism for having quoted so many passages out of his book. On this Marvell observes: "It has, I believe, indeed angered him, as it has been no small trouble to me; but how can I help it? I wish he would be pleased to teach me an art (for, if any man in the world, he hath it) to answer a book without turning over the leaves, or without citing passages. In the mean time, if to transcribe so much out of him must render a man, as he therefore styles me, a 'scandalous plagiary,' I must plead guilty; but by the same law, whoever shall either be witness or prosecutor in behalf of the King, for treasonable words, may be indicted for a highwayman." Parker having viewed some extravaganza of Marvell's riotous wit as if worthy of serious comment, the latter says: "Whereas I only threw it out like an empty cask to amuse him, knowing that I had a whale to deal with, and lest he should overset me; he runs away with it as a very serious business, and so moyles himself with tumbling and tossing it, that he is in danger of melting his spermaceti. A cork, I see, will serve without a hook; and, instead of a harping-iron, this grave and ponderous creature may, like eels, be taken and pulled up only with bobbing." After exposing, in a strain of uncommon eloquence, the wickedness and folly of suspending the peace of the nation on so frivolous a matter as "ceremonial," he says: "For a prince to adventure all upon such a cause, is like Duke Charles of Burgundy, who fought three battles for an imposition upon sheep-skins"; and "for a clergyman to offer at persecution upon this ceremonial account, is (as is related of one of the popes) to justify his indignation for his peacock, by the example of God's anger for eating the forbidden fruit." He justifies his severity towards Parker in a very ludicrous way: "No man needs letters of marque against one that is an open pirate of other men's credit. I remember, within our own time, one Simons, who robbed always on the bricolle, — that is to say, never interrupted the *passengers*, but still set upon the *thieves themselves*, after, like Sir John Falstaff, they were gorged with a booty; and by this way — so ingenious that it was scarce criminal — he lived secure and unmolested all his days, with the reputation of a judge rather than of a highwayman." The sentences we have cited are taken from the "Rehearsal." We had marked many more from his "Divine in Mode," and other writings, but have no space for them.

But he who supposes Marvell to have been nothing but a wit, simply on account of the predominance of that quality, will do him injustice. It is the common lot of such men, in whom some one faculty is found on a great scale, to fail of part of the admiration due to other endowments; possessed in more moderate degree, indeed, but still in a degree far from ordinary. We are subject to the same illusion in gazing on mountain scenery. Fixing our eye on some solitary peak, which towers far above the rest, the groups of surrounding hills look positively diminutive, though they may, in fact, be all of great magnitude.

This illusion is further fostered by another circumstance in the case of great wits. As the object of wit is to amuse, the owl-like gravity of thousands of common readers is apt to decide that wit and wisdom must dwell apart, and that the humorous writer must necessarily be a trifling one. For similar reasons, they look with sage suspicion on every signal display, either of fancy or passion; think a splendid illustration nothing but the ambuscade of a fallacy, and strong emotion as tantamount to a confession of unsound judgment. As Archbishop Whately has well remarked, such men, having been warned that "ridicule is not the test of truth," and that "wisdom and wit are not the same thing, distrust every thing that can possibly be regarded as witty; not having judgment to perceive the combination, when it occurs, of wit and sound reasoning. The ivy wreath completely conceals from their view the point of the *thyrsus*."

The fact is, that all Marvell's endowments were on a large scale, though his wit greatly predominated. His judgment was remarkably clear and sound, his logic by no means contemptible, his sagacity in practical matters great, his talents for business apparently of the first order, and his industry indefatigable. His imagination, though principally employed in ministering to his wit, would, if sufficiently cultivated, have made him a poet considerably above mediocrity: though chiefly alive to the ludicrous, he was by no means insensible to the beautiful. We cannot, indeed, bestow all the praise on his Poems which some of his critics have assigned them. They are very plentifully disfigured by the conceits and quaintnesses of the age, and as frequently want grace of expression and harmony of numbers. Of the compositions which Captain Thompson's indiscriminate admiration would fain have affiliated to his Muse, the best are proved not to be his; and one is of doubtful origin. The hymn beginning,

"When Israel, freed from Pharaoh's hand,"

is a well-known composition of Dr. Watts; while the ballad of "William and Margaret" is of dubious authorship. Though probably of earlier date than the age of Mallet, its reputed author, the reasons which Captain Thompson gives for assigning it to Marvell are altogether unsatisfactory. Still, there are unquestionably many of his genuine poems which indicate a rich, though ill-cultivated fancy; and in some few stanzas there is no little grace of expression. The little piece on the Pilgrim Fathers, entitled "The Emigrants," the fanciful "Dialogue between Body and Soul," the "Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure," and the "Coronet," all contain lines of much elegance and sweetness. It is in his satirical poems, that, as might be expected from the character of his mind, his fancy appears most vigorous; though these too are largely disfigured by the characteristic defects of the age, and many, it must be confessed, are entirely without merit. With two or three lines from his ludicrous satire on Holland, we cannot refrain from amusing the reader. Some of the strokes of humor are certainly happy: —

"Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the offscouring of the British sand;
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when they heaved the lead;
Or what by th' ocean's slow alluvion fell,
Of shipwrecked cockle and the muscle-shell;
This indigested vomit of the sea
Fell to the Dutch by just propriety.
Glad then, as miners who have found the ore,
They, with mad labor, fished the land to shore;
And dived as desperately for each piece
Of earth, as it had been of ambergris;
Collecting anxiously small loads of clay,
Less than what building swallows bear away;
For as with pigmies who best kills the crane,
Among the hungry he that treasures grain,
Among the blind the one-eyed blinkard reigns,
So rules among the drowned he that drains.
Not who first see the rising sun commands:
But who could first discern the rising lands.
Who best could know to pump an earth so leak,
Him they their lord, and country's father, speak."

His Latin poems are amongst his best. The composition often shows no contemptible skill in that language; and here and there the diction and versification are such as would not have absolutely disgraced his great coadjutor, Milton. In all the higher poetic qualities there can, of course, be no comparison between them.

With such a mind as we have ascribed to him, — and we think his works fully justify what has been said, — with such aptitudes for business, soundness of judgment, powers of reasoning, and readiness of sarcasm, one might have anticipated that he would have taken some rank as an orator. Nature, it is certain, had bestowed upon him some of the most important intellectual endowments of one. It is true, indeed, that with his principles and opinions he would have found himself strangely embarrassed in addressing any Parliament in the days of Charles II., and stood but a moderate chance of obtaining a candid hearing. But we have no proof that he ever made the trial. His Parliamentary career in this respect resembled that of a much greater man, — Addison, who, with wit even superior to his own, and with much more elegance, if not more strength of mind, failed signally as a speaker.

Marvell's learning must have been very extensive. His education was superior; and, as we have seen from the testimony of Milton, his industry had made him master, during his long sojourn on the Continent, of several Continental languages. It is certain, also, that he continued to be a student all his days: his works bear ample evidence of his wide and miscellaneous reading. He appears to have been well versed in most branches of literature, though he makes no pedantic display of erudition, and in this respect is favorably distinguished from many of his contemporaries; yet he cites his authors with the familiarity of a thorough scholar. In the department of history he appears to have been particularly well read; and derives his witty illustrations from such remote and obscure sources, that Parker did not hesitate to avow his belief that he had sometimes drawn upon his invention for them. In his reply, Marvell justifies himself in all the alleged instances, and takes occasion to show that his opponent's learning is as hollow as all his other pretensions.

The style of Marvell is very unequal. Though often rude and unpolished, it abounds in negligent felicities, presents us with frequent specimens of vigorous idiomatic English, and now and then attains no mean degree of elegance. It bears the stamp of the revolution which was then passing on the language, — being a medium between the involved and periodic structure, so common during the former half of the century, and which was ill adapted to a language possessing so few inflections as ours, and that simplicity and harmony which were not fully attained till the age of Addison. There is a very large infusion of short sentences, and the structure in general is as unlike that of his great colleague's prose as can be imagined. Many of Marvell's pages flow with so much ease and grace, as to be not unworthy of a later period. To that revolution in style to which we have just alluded, he must, in no slight degree, have contributed; for, little as his works are known or read now, the most noted of them were once universally popular, and perused with pleasure, as Burnet testifies, by every body, "from the king to the tradesman."

Numerous examples show, that it is almost impossible for even the rarest talents to confer permanent popularity on books which turn on topics of temporary interest, however absorbing at the time. If Pascal's transcendent genius has been unable to rescue even the "Lettres Provinciales" from partial oblivion, it is not to be expected that Marvell should have done more for the "Rehearsal Transprosed." Swift, it is true, about half a century later, was pleased, while expressing a similar opinion, to make an exception in favor of Marvell. "There is indeed," says he, "an exception when any great genius thinks it worth his while to expose a foolish piece; so we still read Marvell's answer to Parker with pleasure, though the book it answers be sunk long ago." But this statement is scarcely applicable now. It is true that the "Rehearsal" is occasionally read by the curious; but it is by the resolutely curious alone.

Yet assuredly he has not lived in vain who has successfully endeavored to abate the nuisances of his own time, or to put down some insolent abetter of vice and corruption. Nor is it possible in a world like this, in which there is such continuity of causes and effects, — where one generation transmits its good and its evil to the next, and the consequences of each revolution in principles, opinions, or tastes are propagated along the whole line of humanity, — to estimate either the degree or perpetuity of the benefits conferred by the complete success of works even of transient interest. By modifying the age in which he lives, a man may indirectly modify the character of many generations to come. His works may be forgotten while their effects survive.

Marvell's history affords a signal instance of the benefits which may be derived from well-directed satire. There are cases in which it may be a valuable auxiliary to decency, virtue, and religion, where argument and persuasion both fail. Many, indeed, doubt both the legitimacy of the weapon itself, and the success with which it can be employed. But facts are against them. To hope it can ever supply the place of religion as a radical cure for vice or immorality, would be chimerical; but there are many pernicious customs, violations, of propriety, ridiculous, yet tolerated follies, which religion can scarcely touch without endangering her dignity. To assail them is one of the most legitimate offices of satire; nor is there the slightest doubt that the "Spectator" did more to abate many of the prevailing follies and pernicious customs of the age, than a thousand homilies. This, however, may be admitted, and yet it may be said that it does not reach the case of Marvell and Parker. Society, it may be argued, will bear the exposure of its own evils with great equanimity, and perhaps profit by it; no individual being pointed at, and each being left to digest his own lesson under the pleasant conviction that it was designed principally for his neighbors. As corporations will perpetrate actions of which each individual member would be ashamed, so corporations will listen to charges which every individual member would regard as insults. But no man, it is said, is likely to be reclaimed from error or vice by being made the object of merciless ridicule. All this we believe most true. But then it is not to be forgotten, that it may not be the satirist's object to reclaim the individual, — he may have little hope of that, — he may write for the sake of those whom his victim maligns and injures. When the exorcist takes Satan in hand, it is not because he is an Origenist, and "believes in the conversion of the Devil," but in pity to the supposed objects of his malignity. It is much the same when a man like Marvell undertakes to satirize a man like Parker. Even such a man may be abashed and confounded, though he cannot be reclaimed; and if so, the satirist gains his object, and society gains the benefit. Experience fully shows us that there are many men who will be restrained by ridicule long after they are lost to virtue, and that they are accessible to shame when they are utterly inaccessible to argument.

This was just the good that Marvell effected. He made Parker, it is true, more furious; but he diverted, if he could not turn, the tide of popular feeling, and thus prevented much mischief. Parker, and others like him, were doing all they could to inflame angry passions, to revive the most extravagant pretensions of tyranny, and to preach up another crusade against the nonconformists. Marvell's books were a conductor to the dangerous fluid; if there was any explosion at all, it was an explosion of merriment. "He had all the laughers on his side," says Burnet. In Charles II.'s reign, there were few who belonged to any other class; and then, as now, men found it impossible to laugh and be angry at the same time. It is our firm belief, that Marvell did more to humble Parker, and neutralize the influence of his party, by the "Rehearsal Transprosed," than he could have done by writing half a dozen folios of polemical divinity; just as Pascal did more to unmask the Jesuits and damage their cause by his "Provincial Letters," than had been effected by all the efforts of all their other opponents put together.

But admirable as were Marvell's intellectual endowments, it is his moral worth, after all, which constitutes his principal claim on the admiration of posterity, and which sheds a redeeming lustre on one of the darkest pages of the English annals. Inflexible integrity was the basis of it, — integrity by which he has not unworthily earned the glorious name of the "British Aristides." With talents and acquirements which might have justified him in aspiring to almost any office, if he could have disburdened himself of his conscience; with wit which, in that frivolous age, was a surer passport to fame than any amount either of intellect or virtue, and which, as we have seen, mollified even the monarch himself, in spite of prejudice; Marvell preferred poverty and independence to riches and servility. He had learned the lesson, practised by few in that age, of being content with little, — so that he preserved his conscience. He could be poor, but he could not be mean; could starve, but could not cringe. By economizing in the articles of pride and ambition, he could afford to keep what their votaries were compelled to retrench, the necessaries, or rather the luxuries, of integrity and a good conscience. Neither menaces, nor caresses, nor bribes, nor poverty, nor distress, could induce him to abandon his integrity; or even to take an office in which it might be tempted or endangered. He only who has arrived at this pitch of magnanimity, has an adequate security for his public virtue. He who cannot subsist upon a little, who has not learned to be content with such things as he has, and even to be content with almost nothing; who has not learned to familiarize his thoughts to poverty, much more readily than he can familiarize them to dishonor, is not yet free from peril. Andrew Marvell, as his whole course proves, had done this. But we shall not do full justice to his public integrity, if we do not bear in mind the corruption of the age in which he lived; the manifold apostasies amidst which he retained his conscience; and the effect which such wide-spread profligacy must have had in making thousands almost sceptical as to whether there were such a thing as public virtue at all. Such a relaxation in the code of speculative morals is one of the worst results of general profligacy in practice. But Andrew Marvell was not to be deluded; and amidst corruption perfectly unparalleled, he still continued untainted. We are accustomed to hear of his virtue as a truly Roman virtue, and so it was; but it was something more. Only the best pages of Roman history can supply a parallel: there was no Cincinnatus in those ages of her shame which alone can be compared with those of Charles II. It were far easier to find a Cincinnatus during the period of the English Commonwealth, than an Andrew Marvell in the age of Commodus.

The integrity and patriotism which distinguished him in his relations to the Court, also marked all his public conduct.

He was evidently most scrupulously honest and faithful in the discharge of his duty to his constituents; and, as we have seen, punctilious in guarding against any thing which could tarnish his fair fame, or defile his conscience. On reviewing the whole of his public conduct, we may well say that he attained his wish, expressed in the lines which he has written in imitation of a chorus in the Thyestes of Seneca: —

"Climb at *court* for me that will
Tottering favor's pinnacle;
All I seek is to lie still.
Settled in some secret nest,
In calm leisure let me rest,
And, far off the public stage,
Pass away my silent age.
Thus, when without noise, unknown,
I have lived out all my span,
I shall die without a groan,
An old, honest countryman."

He seems to have been as amiable in his private as he was estimable in his public character. So far as any documents throw light upon the subject, the same integrity appears to have been the basis of both. He is described as of a very reserved and quiet temper; but, like Addison, (whom in this respect, as in some few others, he resembled,) exceedingly facetious and lively amongst his intimate friends. His disinterested championship of others is no less a proof of his sympathy with the oppressed than of his abhorrence of oppression; and many pleasing traits of amiability occur in his private correspondence, as well as in his writings. On the whole, we think that Marvell's epitaph, strong as the terms of panegyric are, records little more than the truth; and that it was not in the vain spirit of boasting, but in the honest consciousness of virtue and integrity, that he himself concludes a letter to one of his correspondents in the words, —

"Disce, puer, virtutem ex me, verumque laborem;
Fortunam ex aliis."

LUTHER'S CORRESPONDENCE AND CHARACTER.*

THE familiar letters of a great man, if they are sufficiently copious, written on a variety of themes, and really unpremeditated, probably furnish us with more accurate data for estimating his character, than either the most voluminous deliberate compositions, or the largest traditional collections of his conversation. The former will always conceal much which letters will disclose; will give not only an imperfect, but perhaps false idea, of many points of character; and will certainly suggest an exaggerated estimate of all the ordinary habitudes of thought and expression. The latter will often fall as much below the true mean of such a man's merits; and, what is of more consequence, must depend — except in the rare case in which some faithful Boswell continually dogs the heels of genius — on the doubtful authority and leaky memory of those who report it. Letters, on the other hand, if they be copious, unpremeditated, and not intended for the eye of the world, will exhibit the character in all its moods and phases, and by its own utterances. While some will disclose to us the habitual states of thought and feeling, and admit us even into the privacy of the heart, others, composed under the stimulus of great emergencies, and in those occasional auspicious expansions of the faculties, which neither come nor cease at our bidding, will furnish no unworthy criterion of what such a mind, even in its most elevated moods, or by its most deliberate efforts, can accomplish.

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* "Edinburgh Review," July, 1845.

Dr. Martin Luther's Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken, vollständig aus den verschiedenen Ausgaben seiner Werke und Briefe, aus andern Büchern und noch unbenutzten Handschriften gesammelt. Kritisch und historisch bearbeitet von DR. WILHELM MARTIN LEBERECHT DE WETTE. 5 vols. 8vo. Berlin.

(*Dr. Martin Luther's Entire Correspondence, carefully compiled from the various Editions of his Works and Letters, from other Books, and from Manuscripts as yet private. Edited, with Critical and Historical Notes, by* DR. WILHELM MARTIN LEBERECHT DE WETTE.)

If ever any man's character could be advantageously studied in his letters, it is surely that of Luther. They are addressed to all sorts of persons, are composed on an immense diversity of subjects, and, as to the mass of them, are more thoroughly unpremeditated, as well as more completely suggested *ex visceribus causæ*, to use the phrase of Cicero, than those of almost any other man. They are also more copious; as copious as those even of his great contemporary Erasmus, to whom letter-writing was equally business and amusement. What appear voluminous collections in our degenerate days, those of Sévigné, Pope, Walpole, Cowper, even of Swift, dwindle in comparison. In De Wette's most authentic and admirable edition, they occupy five very thick and closely printed volumes. The learned compiler, in a preface amusingly characteristic of the literary zeal and indefatigable research of Germany, tells us, that he has unearthed from obscure hiding-places and mouldering manuscripts more than a hundred unprinted letters, and enriched the present collection with their contents. By himself, or his literary agents, he has ransacked "the treasures of the archives of Weimar, the libraries at Jena, Erfurt, Gotha, Wolfenbüttel, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Heidelberg, and Basle"; and has received "precious contributions" from Breslau, Riga, Strasburg, Münich, Zurich, and other places. There are many, no doubt, which time has consigned to oblivion, and perhaps some few which still lie unknown in public or private repositories, — undetected even by the acute literary scent of De Wette, and his emissaries. But there are enough in all conscience to satisfy any ordinary appetite, and to illustrate, if any thing can, the history and character of him who penned them.

Even in a purely literary point of view, these letters are not unworthy of comparison with any thing Luther has left behind him. They contain no larger portion of indifferent Latin, scarcely so much of his characteristic violence and rudeness; while they display in beautiful relief all the more tender and amiable traits of his character, and are fraught with brief but most striking specimens of that intense and burning eloquence for which he was so famed. Very many of them well deserve the admiration which Coleridge (who regretted that selections from them had not been given to the English public) has so strongly expressed. "I can scarcely conceive," he says, "a more delightful volume than might be made from Luther's letters, especially those written from the Wartburg, if they were translated in the simple, sinewy, idiomatic, hearty *mother tongue* of the original. . . . . . A difficult task I admit." He is speaking, of course, of Luther's German letters. Almost all, however, from the Wartburg are in Latin.

Of late years they have received considerable attention. M. Michelet, in his very pleasing volumes, in which he has made Luther draw his own portrait, by presenting a series of extracts from his writings, has derived no small portion of his materials from the letters; while all recent historians of the Reformation, especially D'Aubigné and Waddington,* have dug deep, and with immense advantage, in the same mine. Not only do they form, as De Wette says, "a diary, as it were, of Luther's life," "gleichsam ein Tagebuch seines Lebens"; but they enable us to trace better than in almost any history, because more minutely, the whole early progress of the Reformation.

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* We cannot mention the name of Dr. Waddington without thanking him for the gratification we have derived from the perusal of the three volumes of his "History of the Reformation," and expressing our hopes that he will soon fulfil his promise of a fourth. Less brilliant than that of D'Aubigné, his work is at least its equal in research, certainly not inferior in the comprehensiveness of its views, or the solidity of its reflections, and in severe fidelity is perhaps even superior. Not that, in this last respect, we have much to complain of in D'Aubigné; but as he has

As we conceive that Luther's character could be nowhere more advantageously studied than in this voluminous correspondence, we propose in the present article to make it the basis of a few remarks on his most prominent intellectual and moral qualities.

No modern author, in our opinion, has done such signal injustice to Luther's intellect as Mr. Hallam, whose excellent and well-practised judgment seems to us, in this instance, to have entirely deserted him. "Luther's amazing influence on the revolutions of his own age, and on the opinions of mankind, seems," says he, "to have produced, as is not unnatural, an exaggerated notion of his intellectual greatness." * And he then proceeds to reduce it to assuredly very moderate dimensions, founding his judgment principally on Luther's writings.

Now, if Mr. Hallam had been nothing more than a mere critic, we should not have wondered at such a decision. It would have been as natural in that case to misinterpret the genius of Luther, as for Mallet to write the life of Bacon and "forget that he was a philosopher." But when we reflect

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great skill in the selection and graphic disposition of his materials, so he sometimes sacrifices a little too much to gratify it, — as, for example, in the dramatic form he has given to Luther's narrative of his interview with Miltitz (Vol. II. pp. 8 – 12). There is also a too uniform brilliancy, and too little repose about the style. But it were most ungrateful to deny the rare merits of the work. We only hope its unprecedented popularity may not deprive us of another volume from the pen of Dr. Waddington. His "History of the Reformation" is, in our judgment, very superior to his "Church History," though that has no inconsiderable merit.

* Introduction to the Literature of Europe, Vol. I. p. 513.

that Mr. Hallam is *not* a mere literary critic, and that whatsoever honors he may have achieved in that capacity are yet inferior to those which he has attained as a philosophical historian, we confess our astonishment at the low estimate he seems to have formed of Luther's intellect.

This seems to have arisen from contemplating Luther's character too exclusively in the point of view suggested by the literary nature of the work on which the critic was at the time engaged. It is true that the Reformer's mind did not belong exclusively, or even prevailingly, to either of the two principal types with which we more usually associate genius, and which almost divide the page of literary history between them. The one is the prevailingly philosophical temperament, with numberless specific differences; the other, the prevailingly poetical, with differences equally numerous: the passion of the one class of minds is speculative and scientific truth; that of the other, ideal beauty. Yet there is another, and not less imposing, form of human genius, though it does not figure much on the page of literary history, which has made men as illustrious as man was ever made, either by depth or subtlety of speculation, — by opulence or brilliancy of fancy. This class of minds unite some of the rarest endowments of the philosophical and poetical temperaments; and though the reason in such men is not such as would have made an Aristotle, nor the imagination such as would have made a Homer, these elements are mingled in such proportions and combinations as render the product — the *tertium quid* — not less wonderful than the greatest expansion of either element alone. To these are superadded some qualities which neither bard nor philosopher ever possessed, and the whole is subjected to the action of an energetic will and powerful passions. Such are the minds which are destined to change the face of the world, to originate or control great revolutions, to govern the actions of men by a sagacious calculation of motives, or to govern their very thoughts by the magical power of their eloquence. They are the stuff out of which great statesmen, great conquerors, great orators, are made; — by the last, however, not meaning the mere "mob orator," who attains and preserves a powerful influence by just following the multitude he appears to lead, and who, if popular, is popular in virtue of Swift's receipt for becoming a wise man, — that is, by agreeing with whatever any one may say; we mean the man who, if need be, can stem the torrent as well as drift upon it; who, upon occasion, can tell unpalatable truths and yet rivet attention. To be *such* an orator requires many of the qualities of the philosophical statesman, — the same deep knowledge of the mechanism of human nature in general, the same keen perception of the motives and feelings of the so-conditioned humanity with which it has to deal, the same ready appreciation of the topics and arguments likely to prevail, the same sagacity in calculating moral causes and effects; and we need not wonder, therefore, that the great statesman and the persuasive orator have so often been found united in the same individual.

Now, to achieve any of the great tasks to which this class of minds seem born; to manage vast and difficult affairs with address, and bring them to an unexpectedly prosperous issue; to know how to seize the critical moment of action with proper decision, or to exercise patience and self-control in waiting for it; to penetrate the springs of human conduct, whether in the genus or the individual; to sway the minds of whole communities, as whole forests bow at once before the voice of the tempest; to comprehend and calculate the interaction of numberless causes and effects; to originate and execute daring enterprises in the face of many obstacles, physical and moral, and not only in the midst of opposite wills and conflicting interests, but often by means of them, — all this seems to us to imply as wonderful a combination of intellectual qualities as that which enables the mathematical analyst to disentangle the intricacies of a transcendental equation, or the metaphysician to speculate profoundly on the freedom of the human will, or the origin of evil. Nor do those who have thus been both authors and actors in the *real* drama of history, appear to us less worthy of our admiration than those who have but imagined what the former have achieved. There are, unquestionably, men who have been as famous for what they have done, as others have been or can be for what they have written.

It is precisely to such an order of genius, — whatever his merits or defects as a *writer*, — that the intellect of Luther is, in our judgment, to be referred ; and, considered in this point of view, we doubt whether it is very possible to exaggerate its greatness. In a sagacious and comprehensive survey of the peculiarities of his position in all the rapid changes of his most eventful history ; in penetrating the characters and detecting the motives of those with whom he had to deal ; in fertility of expedients ; in promptitude of judgment and of action ; in nicely calculating the effect of bold measures, especially in great emergencies, — as when he burnt the papal bull, and appeared at the Diet of Worms ; in selecting the arguments likely to prevail with the mass of men, and in that contagious enthusiasm of character which imbues and inspires them with a spirit like its own, and fills them with boundless confidence in its leadership ; — in all these respects, Luther does not appear to us far behind any of those who have played illustrious parts in this world's affairs, or obtained an empire over the minds of their species.

And surely this is sufficient for one man. No one ever denies the intellect of Pericles or Alexander, Cromwell or Napoleon, to be of the highest order, merely because none of these have left ingenious treatises of philosophy, or exquisite strains of poetry, or exhibited any of the traces either of a calm or beautiful intellect : and in like manner it is enough for Luther to be known as the author of the Reformation.

Such are the original limitations of the human faculties, and so distinct the forms of intellectual excellence, that it is at best but one comparatively little sphere that even the greatest of men is qualified to fill. Take him out of that, and the giant becomes a dwarf, the genius a helpless changeling. Aristotle, though he wrote admirably on rhetoric, would have made, we fear, but an indifferent Demosthenes; and Demosthenes would probably have been but an obscure expounder of the principles of his own art. After making all allowances for the influence of education, and conceding that it is difficult to calculate the condition of any mind under a different training, we are compelled to admit that there are cases, and those usually of minds preëminently great in a single department, where the native bias is so strong, that it is beyond the art of all the schoolmastering in the world to alter it.

Earnestly contending that Luther's intellect is to be principally regarded in the light we have indicated, we yet must profess our belief, that, even in a purely literary point of view, Mr. Hallam has done him less than justice. When we consider the popular design of his writings, and that they fulfilled it, many of their *apparent* defects will disappear; and when we consider their voluminousness — the rapidity with which they were thrown off — and the overwhelming engagements under the pressure of which they were produced, many *real* defects may well be pardoned. A word or two on each of these topics.

As to their character, they were chiefly designed *ad populum*, — addressed to human nature so-and-so conditioned; and whether we look at what history has told us of the state of that public mind to which they appealed, or to their notorious effects, we think it must be admitted, that they were admirably calculated to accomplish their purpose. It has been already said, that we must look in the mind of Luther for the species of greatness which may fairly be expected there, and not for one to which an intellect so constituted could make no pretensions. No man will challenge for him the praise of metaphysical subtlety, or calmness of judgment in dealing with evidence. To neither the one nor the other surely can *he* lay claim, who flatters himself that he has found an escape from the absurdities of transubstantiation in the equal absurdities of consubstantiation; or who thinks himself warranted in setting aside the evidence for the authenticity of the Epistle of James, because he supposes he has found a sentence in it which contradicts his interpretation of an Epistle of Paul, the authenticity of which has no higher evidence. The class of intellects to which we have ventured to refer that of Luther are robust and sagacious, rather than subtle or profound; little fitted for the investigation of abstract truth, and impatient of whatever is not practical; better adapted for a skilful advocacy of principles than for calm investigation of them, and little solicitous, in their exhibition, of philosophic precision or theoretic completeness. Seizing with instinctive sagacity those points which are best calculated to influence the common mind, they are not very ambitious (even if they could attain it) of the praise of a severely logical method. But they well know how to do that for which the mere philosopher in his turn would find himself strangely incapacitated. They estimate precisely the measure of knowledge or of ignorance, the prejudices and the passions, of those with whom they have to deal, and pitch the whole tone of argument in unison with it. They judge of arguments, not so much by their abstract value, or even by the degree of force they may have on their minds, as by the relation in which they are likely to be viewed by others: if necessary, they prefer even a comparatively feeble argument, if it can be made readily intelligible, and be forcibly exhibited, to a stronger one, if that stronger one be so refined as to escape the appreciation of the common mind.

And such topics they treat with a vivacity and vehemence of which a philosopher would be as incapable as he would be disgusted with the method. He is but too apt, when he assumes the uncongenial office of a popular instructor, to generalize particular statements into their most abstract expression; he resembles the mathematician, who is not satisfied till he has clothed the determinate quantities of arithmetic in the universal symbols of algebra; he must assign each argument its place, not according to its relative weight, but according to his own notions of its abstract conclusiveness; he must adopt the only method which philosophical precision demands, and to violate it would be more than his fastidious taste can prevail upon itself to concede to that vulgar thing, — the *practical.*

It is not necessary to institute any comparison as to the comparative value or dignity of the functions of those whose calm intellect best qualifies them to investigate truth, and of those whose prerogative it is to make it triumph, not only over the understandings of men, but over their imaginations and affections; to give it a vivid presence in the heart. It suffices that neither class can be fully equipped for their high tasks without a mental organization exquisitely adapted to its object, and well worthy of the highest admiration. They are the complements of each other, and neither can be perfect alone. "The wise in heart," says Solomon, "shall be called prudent, but the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning." Truth at the bottom of her well is of about as much use as water there, and is of very little use without some appliances to bring it to the lips of the thirsty.

Those who would do such a man as Luther justice in the perusal of his controversial writings, must bear such considerations in mind. It must be recollected that they were most of them composed *pro re natâ,* — for the purpose of impressing the popular mind in given circumstances, in an age of great ignorance, barbarism, and coarseness. We are at best not altogether qualified to judge how far they were wisely adapted to their end; but we are convinced that the more carefully the whole relations of Luther and his age are studied, the more will they be found to illustrate his general sagacity, and the less reason will they leave us to wonder at their astonishing success.

Even his positive faults — as, for example, his violence of invective and his excessive diffuseness, which we do not deny flowed in a great measure, the one from the vehemence of his nature, and the other from the haste with which he wrote — were often deliberately committed by him, as most likely to answer his purpose. We should hesitate to state this, were it not for Luther's repeated and explicit declarations on this very point, in his letters. We should hesitate, because we are jealous of that biographical prejudice which will still find out that the object of its blind eulogy had some deep design even in the veriest blunders; and that foibles and failings not only "leaned to virtue's side," but were themselves virtues.

In both the above points, Luther unquestionably has sins enough to answer for; he is as often tedious and inelegant as offensively coarse. Still,—however it may be thought that we are defending his sagacity at the expense of things quite as valuable, his taste and good feeling,—nothing is clearer, from his own admissions, than that he often committed these faults of set purpose, and with his eyes wide open. Thus he apologizes for the diffuseness of certain compositions in his letters (No. 32 and No. 134), on the ground that they were designed for the "rudest ears and understandings." To the common mind of his day, truths which are to us truisms,—which will hardly bear the briefest expression,—which, in fact, are so familiar that they are forgotten,—were startling novelties. The populace required, in his judgment, "line upon line, and precept upon precept"; not only "here a little and there a little," but here and there, and everywhere, a great deal. The same apology is required for the diffuseness of other theologians of that day, of far severer intellect, and much more elegance,—Calvin and Melancthon, for example. As to his arrogant tone and rude invective, though both were natural expressions of the enthusiasm and vehemence of his character, they also were systematically adopted, and were both, no doubt, upon the whole, most subservient to his purpose. Timidity and irresolution would have been his ruin. On the other hand, his self-reliance and fearlessness,—the grandeur and dilation of his carriage,—his very contempt of his adversaries,—all tended to give courage and confidence to those who possessed them not, and to inspire his party with his own spirit. His voice never failed to act like a trumpet-call upon the hearts of his followers, — to reassure them when depressed, and to rally them when defeated. No other tone, no other language, could have had the same effect. Considering his position, there is a sort of sublimity in his audacity. "I know and am certain," says he to Spalatin (1521), "that Jesus Christ our Lord lives and reigns; and, buoyant in this knowledge and confidence, I will not fear a hundred thousand popes." "My doctrines will stand," says he the following year, in his reply to King Henry, "and the Pope will fall in spite of all the powers of air, earth, hell. They have provoked me to war; they shall have it. They scorned the peace I offered them, — peace they shall have no longer. God shall look to it; which of the two shall first retire from the struggle, — the Pope or Luther!" Five hundred such expressions might be cited. On the whole, we are disposed to acquiesce in the judgment of Dr. Waddington, expressed in relation to the last-mentioned work of the Reformer. "I have no question," says he, "that the cause of Luther was, upon the whole, advanced and recommended even by the temerity of his unsparing invective; and that, had he given less offence to his enemies, he would have found less zeal, less courage, and far less devotion in his friends." *

It is not uninstructive to hear Luther in some of his letters defending *on plan* the vehemence of his invective. "I am determined," he says in his reply to King Henry, "to assume, day by day, a loftier and loftier tone against these senseless little tyrants, and to meet their madness with a madness like their own." "I suppress many things," he writes to Spalatin as early as 1519, "for the sake of the Elector and the University, which I would otherwise pour out against Rome, — that destroyer alike of Scripture and the Church. It cannot be that the truth respecting either can be treated without giving offence to that wild beast. Do not hope that I shall keep quiet and safe, unless you wish to see me abandon theology altogether. Let your friends think me mad if they will." [*] "What is it to me," he says to Spalatin in his account of the Leipsic disputation, — "what is it to me if I speak rashly and offensively, if I but speak truth, and that Catholic truth? . . . . . Why, it was always so; truth has ever been rash, bitter, seditious, offensive. . . . . . What is it to me that the Thomists are offended with truth? It is sufficient for me that it is neither heretical nor erroneous." [†] "I knew," he says to Spalatin in 1522, "that whatever I might write against the King of England would offend many, but I chose to do it, — *sed ita placuit mihi*, — and many causes rendered it necessary." [‡] And to another friend (unknown), in August of the same year, he says: "My gracious prince and many other friends have often admonished me on this subject; but my answer is, that I will not comply, nor ought I. My cause is not a cause of middle measures (*ein mittelhandel*), in which one may concede or give way, even as I, like a fool, have hitherto done." [§] Few readers of Luther, however, will think there was much reason for this self-accusation.

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* History of the Reformation, Vol. II. p. 32.

It will not be supposed for a moment, that we are the apologists of his too habitual virulence and ferocity of invective. Not even the spirit of the age can form an apology for them; though in all fairness it ought to be remembered, that so completely were these offensive qualities of controversy characteristic of it, that then, and long after, they were exhibited by men who had neither Luther's vehement passions, nor his provocations to plead in extenuation; often so unconsciously, indeed, that the refined and equable Thomas More imitates and transcends the Reformer's coarseness, even while he reproves it.

But whatever the defects and inequalities of Luther's writings, there is one quality not unsparingly displayed, which ought to have protected him from so low an estimate as Mr. Hallam seems to have formed, — we mean his *eloquence ;* for which he was famed by all his contemporaries, — which he was not grudgingly admitted to possess even by his enemies, — and which still lives in numberless passages of his writings to justify their eulogiums. Yet Mr. Hallam says, that, in his judgment, Luther's Latin works at least "are not marked by any striking ability, and still less by any impressive eloquence." Surely he must have been thinking only of the moderate Latinity when he used the last expression; for unquestionably the *soul* of eloquence is often there, however rugged the form. Far more justly speaks Frederic Schlegel. "Luther," says he, "displays a most original eloquence, surpassed by few names that occur in the whole history of literature. He had, indeed, all those properties which render a man fit to be a revolutionary orator." If this be so, the intellect of Luther must be regarded as one of the rarest phenomena which appear in the world of mind. Such, at least, has been hitherto the uniform judgment of criticism. To possess a genius for consummate eloquence is always considered to imply intellectual excellence of the highest order; and, whether we consider the paucity of examples of such genius, or how various, how exquisitely balanced and adjusted, are the powers which must equip the truly great orator, we shall see no reason whatever to quarrel with this judgment. So peculiar are the required modifications and combinations of intellect, imagination, and passion, that it may be pretty safely averred we shall as soon see the reproduction of an Aristotle as of a Demosthenes.

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[*] De Wette, Vol. I. p. 260.

[†] Ibid., pp. 300, 301.

[‡] Ibid., Vol. II. p. 244.

[§] Ibid., p. 244.

All the prime elements of this species of mental power, Luther seems to have possessed in perfection. It has been admitted that he had not a mind well fitted for the investigation of abstract truth; but he had what was to him of more importance, — great practical sagacity, and vast promptitude and vigor of argument. His imagination, though as little solicitous about the abstractly beautiful, as his reason about the abstractly speculative, was fertile of those brief, homely, energetic images which are most effective in real eloquence; and in intensity and vehemence of passion, even Demosthenes was not his superior. His native language he wrote with the utmost force; and, when he pleased, no one could express himself with a more pregnant brevity. To the continuous excellence, the consummate taste, the exquisite finish, the minute graces, of him who "fulmined over Greece," Luther, it is true, had no pretensions, — as indeed might be expected, considering the circumstances and the age in which his intellect was developed; but in every part of his controversial works, most frequently in his briefer writings, as in his "Appeal to a Future Council," his "Babylonish Captivity," his "Appeal to the German Nobility," and not least in his letters, occur frequent bursts of the most vivid and impassioned eloquence. He abounds in passages, which, even at this distance of time, make our hearts throb within us as we read them. Such is that expression with which he defied the sentence of excommunication. "As they have excommunicated me in defence of their sacrilegious heresy, so do I excommunicate them on behalf of the holy truth of God; and let Christ, our judge, decide whether of the two excommunications has the greater weight with him." Such is that memorable sentence with which he dropped the papal bull into the flames, and which, even from his lips, would, a few years before, have thrilled the assembled multitudes with horror. "As thou hast troubled and put to shame the Holy One of the Lord, so be thou troubled and consumed in the eternal fires of hell." Such, above all, is that noble declaration with which he concluded his defence at Worms. "Since your Majesty requires of me a simple and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: — I cannot submit my faith either to popes or councils, since it is clear as noonday that they have often erred, and even opposed one another. If, then, I am not confuted by Scripture, or by cogent reasons, ... I neither can nor will retract any thing; for it cannot be right for a Christian to do any thing against his conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me!" This eloquence, indeed, is transient; it flashes out, like the lightning, for an instant, and again withdraws into the cloud. But it is lightning that blasts and scathes wherever it strikes.

The influence which Luther's eloquence exerted over his contemporaries is testified, not only by the deference with which he was listened to by those who were predisposed to applaud, — a very inadequate criterion of merit, — but by the profound attention which he was able to command, even from those who were hostile or alienated. This was seen, not only on great occasions, as at Worms, — not only in the enthusiasm with which he had imbued a whole nation, — but by the success with which he performed the equally difficult task of restraining the fanatical excesses of some of his own followers. When, under the leadership of the acute but impetuous Carlstadt, some of them had been induced, during his residence at the Wartburg, to outrun Luther's zeal, and to do what he admitted might be right to be done, but in a wrong spirit, — with violence and uncharitableness, — all eyes were directed to Luther as the only man who could appease the tumult. Braving all personal danger, and in defiance of the wishes of the Elector himself, he descended from his retreat, and all was quiet again. For many successive days he preached against the innovators, though without mentioning Carlstadt's name, and his progress was one continued triumph. It is true that, in his subsequent visit to Orlamund, he had not the same success; but, in addition to his being in the wrong on the Sacramentarian question, Carlstadt was at that spot regarded as another Luther.

Of the briefer compositions of Luther, few are more eloquent than the letter he addressed to Frederic, when the Legate Cajetan wrote to urge that prince to abandon the hated monk to the tender mercies of Rome. In this remarkable composition, which was thrown off on the same day in which he received the legate's letter, he assures Frederic that he would prefer exile, to protection at the peril of his prince's safety. The nobility of mind, the magnanimity it displays, are well worthy of Luther; but, without denying them, we cannot but think that the whole letter, as well as that to Spalatin on the same occasion, is constructed with consummate skill; and that, while resolving on that course which his own bold and lofty spirit prompted, he has introduced all those topics which were likely either to move the sympathy or alarm the pride of the prince. "If we praise his magnanimity," says Dr. Waddington, "we must at the same time admire his forethought and discretion." The very pathos is irresistible. "I am waiting your strictures," says he to Spalatin, though the letter was, of course, intended for his master's eye, "on the answer that I have sent to the legate's letter, unless you think it unworthy of any reply. But I am looking daily for the anathemas from Rome, and setting all things in order; so that, when they arrive, I may go forth prepared and girded like Abraham, ignorant whither I shall go, — nay, rather, well assured whither, — for God is everywhere." *

One brief passage in this letter, not given by Waddington, and sadly mutilated by D'Aubigné, seems to us must happily conceived and expressed. Cajetan had urged the Elector to give up the monk, but contents himself with simply averring his "certain knowledge" of his guilt. Luther thus replies: "But this I cannot endure, that my accuser should endeavor to make my most sagacious and prudent sovereign play the part of another Pilate. When the Jews brought Christ before that ruler, and were asked, 'What accusation they preferred, and what evil the man had done?' they said, 'If he had not been a malefactor, we would not have delivered him to thee.' So this most reverend legate, when he has presented brother Martin, with many injurious speeches, and the prince possibly asks, 'What has the little brother done?' will reply, 'Trust

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* De Wette, Vol. I. p. 188.

me, illustrious prince, I speak the truth from certain knowledge, and not from opinion.' *I* will answer for the prince: 'Let *me* know this certain knowledge; let it be committed to writing; formed into letters; and when this is done, I will send brother Martin to Rome, or rather I will seize and slay him myself; then I will consult my honor, and leave not a stain upon my fair fame. But as long as that "certain knowledge" shuns the light, and appears only in assertions, ... I cannot trust myself in the dark.' . . . . . Thus would *I* answer him, illustrious prince. But your far-famed sagacity needs neither instructor nor prompter." *

Of Cajetan, during the negotiations with him, he writes to Carlstadt: "The legate will not permit me to make either a public or private defence. His wish, so he says, is to act the part of a father, rather than of a judge; and yet he will listen to nothing from me but the words, 'I recant and acknowledge my error,' — and these words will I never utter. . . . . . He styles me, '*sein lieben Sohn*.' . . . . . I know how little that means. Still, I doubt not I should be most acceptable and beloved if I would but speak the single word *revoco*. But I will not become a heretic by renouncing the faith which has made me a Christian. Sooner would I be banished, — burnt, — excommunicated." † In the same lofty spirit of faith he eloquently exclaims, in a passage not cited by Waddington or D'Aubigné: "Let who will be angry, — of an impious silence will not *I* be found guilty, who am conscious that I am 'a debtor to the truth,' howsoever unworthy. Never without blood, never without danger, has it been possible to assert the cause of Christ; but as he died for us, so, in his turn, he demands that, by confession of his name, we should die for him. 'The servant is not greater than his Lord.' 'If they have persecuted me,' he himself tells us, 'they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.'" ‡

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* De Wette, Vol. I. pp. 183, 184.

† Ibid., p. 161.

‡ Ibid., p. 334.

Passages such as these are constantly occurring in Luther's letters; and if they contain not the elements of eloquence, we profess that we are yet to seek the meaning of the term.

And even if Luther's writings were less fraught with the traces of a vigorous intellect than they are, there are two achievements of his, the like of which were never performed except where there was great genius. First, such was his mastery over his native language, that, under his plastic hand and all-subduing energy, it ceased to be a rugged and barbarous dialect, almost unfit for the purposes of literature; for which, indeed, he may be said to have created it. Secondly, he achieved, almost single-handed, the translation of the whole Scriptures; and (whatever the faults which necessarily arose from the defective scholarship of the age) with such idiomatic strength and racy energy, that his version has ever been the object of universal veneration, and is unapproachable by any which has since appeared. The enthusiasm with which such a man as Frederic Schlegel speaks of it, shows that, in the eye of those who are most capable of judging, it is thought to have immense merit.

In estimating the genius of Luther, as reflected in his writings, it is impossible to leave wholly out of consideration their quantity, the rapidity with which they were composed, and the harassing duties amidst which they were produced. He died at the no very advanced age of sixty-two, and yet his collected works amount to seven folio volumes. His correspondence alone fills five bulky octavos.

When we reflect that these works were not the productions of retired leisure, but composed amidst all the oppressive duties and incessant interruptions of a life like his, we pause aghast at the energy of character which they display; and wonder that that busy brain and ever-active hand could sustain their office so long. Of the distracting variety and complication of his engagements, he gives us, in more than one of his letters, an amusing account. Their very contents, indeed, bear witness to them. The centre and mainspring of the whole great movement, — the principal counsellor in great emergencies, — the referee in disputes and differences amongst his own party, — solicited for advice alike by princes, and scholars, and pastors, on all sorts of matters, public and private, — having the "care of all the churches," and beset at the same time by a host of inveterate and formidable adversaries, — the wonder is, not that he discharged many of his duties imperfectly, but that he could find time to discharge them at all. Not only are there numberless letters on all the ordinary themes of condolence and congratulation, — of recommendation on behalf of poor scholars and pastors, — of advice to distant ministers and churches in matters of ecclesiastical order and discipline; but letters sometimes affording whimsical proofs of the triviality of the occasions on which his aid was sought, and the patience with which it was given. Now he replies to a country parson who wanted to know how to manage the exordium and peroration of his sermons; now to a worthy prior to tell him the best mode of keeping his conventual accounts, — that he may know precisely how much "beer" and "wine" — "*cerevisia et vinum*" — was consumed in the *hospitium* and "refectory" respectively; * now to make arrangements for the wedding festival of a friend; now to plead the cause of a maiden of Torgau, whose betrothed (no less than the Elector's own barber) had given her the slip.†

The very style of the letters bears evidence to the pressure of duty under which they were written. Most of the shorter ones are expressed with a brevity, a business-like air, which reminds us of nothing so much as the style of a merchant's counting-house.

Of the variety of his engagements, even before the conflict of his life commenced (1516), he says to his friend John Lange: "I could find employment almost for two amanuenses; I do scarcely any thing all day but write letters, so that I know not whether I may not be writing what I have already written: you will see. I am conventual preacher, chaplain, pastor, and parish minister, director of studies, vicar of the priory, that is, prior eleven times over, inspector of the fisheries at Litzkau, counsel to the inns of Herzeberg in Torgau, lecturer on Paul, and expounder of the Psalms." At a later period he found there might be engagements yet heavier than these. In excuse of an absurd blunder in translating a Hebrew word, he writes (1521): "I was distracted and occupied, as often happens, with various thoughts. I am one of the busiest of men: I preach twice a day; I am compiling a psalter, laboring at the postils, replying to my adversaries, assailing the bull both in Latin and German, and defending myself, to say nothing of writing letters," &c.* "I would have written to both our friends," he says to James Strauss (1524), "but it is incredible with what business I am overwhelmed, so that I can scarcely get through my letters alone. The whole world begins to press me down, so that I could even long to die, or be translated," — "*opto vel mori vel tolli*." †

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* De Wette, Vol. I. p. 23.

† Ibid., Vol. II. p. 317.

These last two passages, not cited by D'Aubigné or Waddington, perhaps better illustrate the pressure of his duties than the first, which they both have given.

When, in addition to all this, we take into account the promptitude of his pen, and that his antagonists seldom had to wait long for an answer, we cannot be surprised that much which he wrote should have inadequately represented his mental powers.

Nor is mere bulk to be left out of consideration in estimating the vigor of his intellect; for, though it is itself no criterion of genius, — many of the most voluminous writers having been amongst the worst and dullest, — yet if we find large fragments of such writings richly veined with gold, however impure the ore in which it is discovered, we may reasonably infer, that, if their authors had written less and with more elaboration, they would have left behind them far more splendid monuments of their genius; and thus, in the estimate of its true dimensions, the *quantity* of what they have written becomes an essential element. This consideration ought, in all fairness, to be applied, not only to Luther, but to all his great contemporaries, and to all the theologians of any eminence in the succeeding age. They wrote with far too great rapidity and frequency to do themselves full justice. The gold of genius is in their works, but spread out thin; its essence is there, but undistilled; in the shape of a huge pile of leaves, not in a little phial of liquid perfume.

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* De Wette, Vol. I. p. 554.

† Ibid., Vol. II. p. 505.

None can be more deeply convinced that the hasty and voluminous writings of Luther afforded but an inadequate index of his powers than was Luther himself. This is evident from his own estimate of his writings, formed at the close of life, and expressed in the general preface to his collected works. He there laments the hurry in which they had often been composed, and the want of accuracy and method which distinguishes them. He even speaks of them in terms of unjust depreciation, and declares, no doubt in sincerity, but in strange ignorance of himself, his willingness that they should be consigned to oblivion, and other and better works which had subsequently appeared substituted in their place. The following are sentences from this memorable preface: "Multum diuque restiti illis qui meos libros, *seu verius confusiones mearum lucubrationum* voluerunt editas, tum quod nolui antiquorum labores meis novitatibus obrui, et lectorem a legendis illis impediri, tum quod nunc, Dei gratia, exstant methodici libri quam plurimi. . . . . . His rationibus adductus, cupiebam *omnes libros meos* perpetuâ oblivione sepultos, ut melioribus esset locus."

But whatever the merits of Luther's writings, it has been already admitted that it is not in them that we recognize the cheif evidences of the power and compass of his intellect. His pretensions to be considered one of the great minds of his species, are more truly, as well as more wisely, rested on his actions;—on the skill and conduct which he displayed through all the long conflict with his gigantic adversary, and the ineffaceable traces which he left of himself on the mind of his age, and on that of all succeeding ages. The more his position at various periods is studied, and the deeper the insight into the history of his times, the more obvious, we are persuaded, will appear his practical sagacity, the soundness as well as promptitude of his judgment, the wisdom as well as boldness of his measures. It will be seen, too, that in not a few instances his very boldness was itself wisdom.

From his first encounter with Tetzel, and the appearance of the celebrated Theses, to the Diet of Worms, and his abduction to the Wartburg, his history is perhaps as eventful as that of any man has ever been; and it is impossible, we think, not to see that he conducted his arduous enterprise with infinite address, as well as energy. Again and again did his formidable enemy, unfamiliar with defeat,—before whom every antagonist had for ages been crushed,—exhaust her power, her menaces, her flatteries, her arts, in vain. For the first time, her famed diplomacy, her proverbial craft, were at fault; nuncios and legates returned bootless to their papal master. Cajetan, and Miltitz, and Eck, and Aleander were all foiled at their own weapons. But he displayed his singular sagacity not more strongly by his address in these negotiations, and in the fertile expedients by which he frustrated or parried the efforts of his enemies, than in his quick perception of the turning-points of the great controversy, and the judicious positions in which he intrenched himself accordingly.

Let us be permitted to remind the reader of a few instances. Against the usurping and all-presuming spirit of Rome, he opposed the counter principle of the absolute supremacy of Scripture, and to every clamorous demand for retraction replied to legates, nuncios, Diets, alike, "Let my errors be first proved by *that* authority." Nothing is more frequently iterated by him than this maxim, which he often lays down with a brief energy which reminds us of the celebrated sentence of Chillingworth.

Aware that this principle involved another equally opposed to the jealous policy of Rome, he foresaw the immense importance to his cause of placing the Bible in every body's hands; and promptly providing the means as well as foreseeing the results, he toiled day and night till he had unlocked for the people the treasures of Scripture in his own rich and idiomatic version. If he did not always *consistently* pursue this principle to its extreme limits, and practically assert the right of private judgment, yet he admitted it in theory. Such expressions as the following will prove this: "The right of inquiring and judging concerning matters of faith belongs to all Christians, and to each; and so absolutely, that cursed be he who would abridge this right by a single hair's breadth." *

In opposition to that system of spiritual barter, which formed the essence of Romanism, and by which it had so deeply degraded the Gospel, he arrayed, sometimes too paradoxically it is true, the forgotten doctrine of justification by faith.

Perceiving that the dominion of Rome was founded in ignorance, and that his constant appeal must be to the intelligence of the people, he labored incessantly to promote the interests of learning and the diffusion of knowledge; and did much by his enlightened advocacy to give the Reformation one of its most glorious characteristics, — its close alliance with scholarship and science.† Deeply disgusted with that scholastic philosophy, which, without being perhaps fully versed in it, he knew to be a main pillar of the Romish system, he not only labored to supplant it by a Scriptural theology, but was scarcely less anxious than Erasmus himself that polite letters should be substituted in its stead. An equally decisive example of his sagacity is to be seen in the uniform repudiation of physical force, as fatal to his cause; the more remarkable, when we reflect on the impetuosity of his own character, and the notions of that age, — an age when violence was so familiar, and almost the sole, as it was the most welcome, instrument of all revolutions. He consistently asserted the moral power of truth throughout his whole career, even when the menaces of his enemies seemed to justify an opposite course, and when the indiscreet zeal of some of his friends, more especially Philip, Landgrave of Hesse,* Sickingen, and Von Hutten, were impatient to try sharper weapons than those of argument. In January, 1521, (not June, as stated by Dr. Waddington,) he writes to Spalatin: "You see what Hutten wants. But I am averse to strive for the Gospel by violence and bloodshed. By the word of God was the world subdued, by that word has the Church been preserved, and by that word shall it also be repaired."† "I hear," he writes to Melancthon from the Wartburg, "that an attack has been made at Erfurdt on the house of the priests. I wonder that the senate has permitted or connived at it, and that Prior Lange has been silent. For though it is well that these impious adversaries should be restrained, yet the mode of doing it must bring reproach and a just defeat upon the Gospel."‡ "We have a right to speak," he firmly admonished the rash innovators, who had begun to demolish images and windows, "but none whatever to compel. Let us preach ; the rest belongs to God. If I appeal to force, what shall I gain ? Grimace, forced uniformity, and hypocrisy. But there will be no hearty sincerity, no faith, no love. Where these are wanting, all are wanting ; and I would not give a straw for such a victory."

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* Cont. Reg. Angliæ, L. Op., Vol. II. p. 532.

† This is fully proved by citations from Luther's writings given by D'Aubigné, Vol. III. pp. 236 – 243. Luther's truly enlarged views on this subject are also frequently disclosed in his correspondence.

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* If Luther had as strongly resisted every other erring impulse of this impetuous prince, he would have escaped the heaviest imputation on his character. But, alas! the document in which, for *state reasons*, Luther, and Melancthon, and Bucer, and others, sanctioned Philip in *bigamy*, — dispensing, in *his* case, with what they *admitted* to be a general law of Christian morals, — remains; and can be read only with grief and shame.

† De Wette, Vol. I. p. 543.

‡ Ibid., Vol. II. pp. 7, 8.

We all know that it was not for want of courage that Luther adopted this pacific course. The fearlessness with which he faced the plague in 1516, saying, "The world will not perish because brother Martin falls," followed him through life. It is a noble trait of his character, that on the above occasion he sent the students away, though he persisted in not quitting his post himself ; and, on a subsequent occasion, he was anxious that his friend Melancthon should not imitate his own heroism. "Obsecro," he writes to Spalatin (1521), "ne Philippus maneat, si pestis irruat."

Nor was his sagacity less shown in much of the by-play of the great drama. On his letter to Frederic, and the skill with which he pleaded his cause, even while he seemed to abandon it, we have already touched. Let us take another instance. The centre of a stupendous revolution, surrounded by enthusiastic spirits, an enthusiast himself, it is astonishing how free, for the most part, he kept himself and his followers from practical fanaticism.* When Mark Stubner and his associates appeared at Wittemberg with their confident claims to revelation, during Luther's residence at the Wartburg, even Melancthon wavered. Luther remained firm: he adhered to his great principle of the supremacy of the Scriptures, disclaimed all new revelations, and declared that any messenger from God must prove his commission by the only credentials, — the power of working miracles. He, at the same time, adhered to another equally sound principle, and declared that these fanatics ought not to be subjected to persecution. In the deplorable "war of the peasants," we have similar proofs of his penetration. He pleaded for a timely redress of many of their wrongs, and foretold the

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* We, of course, do not mean to assert that Luther was always thus *personally* superior to spiritual illusion. His reputed encounters with the Devil at the Wartburg are quite sufficient to prove this. But the example of Cromwell and many others may teach us that religious enthusiasm, or even fanaticism, is not inconsistent with the deepest practical sagacity and the wisest conduct of affairs. We are also disposed to think, that very many of the expressions on which this species of illusion has been charged on Luther, are but strong tropical modes of representing those internal conflicts of which every Christian is sensible, but which few have waged with so intense an agony as himself. The incidents at the Wartburg cannot be thus accounted for. But none will be surprised at these who will peruse the accounts he himself gives of his health, in the letters written from that place. Deep solitude, un-

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wonted diet, prolonged sleeplessness, intense anxiety, had evidently produced the most extensive derangement of all the digestive processes. The distressing "tinnitus capitis" of which he complains, as well as other exquisitely painful symptoms to which we cannot more particularly advert, show the condition he was in. No physician reading certain sentences (Vol. II. pp. 2, 6, 17, 22) would wonder at any fancies in which Luther's hypochondriacal imagination might indulge; or that in his case those fancies took the direction of his habitual thoughts. The same hypochondriacal symptoms often appeared subsequently; and they are, as might be expected, generally associated with religious depression.

On the subject of Luther's spiritual encounters (as well as on some other interesting points of his history), we beg to refer the reader to some remarks in an article in this journal (Vol. LXIX. p. 273); since claimed, and reprinted with others, by its accomplished author, Sir J. Stephen. Had that admirable essay been seen when this was composed (an interval of seven years elapsed between the appearance of the two), it is probable that the latter would never have seen the light. On comparison, however, it will be found, as usually happens when two writers, however inferior one may be to the other, independently meditate the same subject, that the topics selected are far from being always the same. With a general harmony of views, the points principally insisted upon in the one essay are not those which are chiefly treated in the other. The magnitude of the theme sufficiently accounts for this; so spacious and rich a field as Luther's genius would still leave enough to fill the sheaf of a humble gleaner like myself, even after the sickle of so able a reaper as my accomplished friend had been employed upon it.

consequences of neglecting them. But when the people commenced their horrid excesses, he advocated with superfluous, and even rabid violence, the adoption of the severest measures of chastisement. Some of his expressions, indeed, are perfectly shocking; and we can only account for their vehemence by supposing, that, foreseeing — what was actually the case — that the popular excesses would be malignantly attributed to the Reformation itself, he was determined to anticipate slander, and provide, as he has done by even an ostentatious opposition, for the defence of himself and his adherents.

The same singular sagacity is seen in the temperate manner in which he attempted to realize the results of the Reformation, and to reconstruct the edifice he had demolished. He was no violent iconoclast, — no wholesale innovator like Carlstadt. But we need say nothing on this head; the subject has been beautifully noticed by D'Aubigné in the commencement of his third volume; where he shows, that the impression that Luther was a rash, headlong revolutionist, is altogether erroneous.

But it may be further asserted, that, in the most audacious actions of his life, that very audacity, in the majority of instances, was itself wisdom. Take, for example, his letter from the Wartburg to Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, commanding, rather than beseeching, him not to revive the infamous Indulgences. We do not defend the taste or decency of the style; but the result proves that Luther knew his man. It was followed by a reply as deferential as if the monk had been the archbishop, and the archbishop the monk. It was on this occasion that he used some most remarkable expressions to Spalatin, who had enjoined silence, and who had enforced his injunctions by those of Frederic. "I have seldom read more unwelcome letters than your last," he writes; "so that I not only delayed to reply, but had determined not to reply at all. I will not bear what you have said, that the Prince will not suffer the Archbishop to be written to, and that the public peace must not be disturbed. I will rather lose you, the Prince, and every creature on earth. If I have resisted the Archbishop's creator, the Pope, shall I succumb to the Pope's creature? . . . . Non sic, Spalatine; non sic, Princeps. . . . . I am resolved not to listen to you; fixum est, te non auditum iri."*

In like manner, his "Appeal to a Future Council," prepared while awaiting the fulmination of the bull, but surreptitiously published before it came (as Luther expressly affirms), brought thousands to his standard; and still more may be said for those bold and unsparing invectives against the abuses of Rome, in the "Babylonish Captivity," and in the "Address to the German Nobility." It may be similarly asserted, that no measure whatever could have been so critically well timed as that most decisive one of committing the decretals and entire pontifical code to the flames, and crowning the hecatomb with the formidable bull itself. It is not only one of the most striking events of history, and exhibits the chief actor in an attitude truly sublime, but was a most felicitous and politic expedient. It is curious, however, to hear Luther admitting, in his correspondence, that even *his* heart sometimes misgave him before the performance of that most significant act. "I burnt the papal books and the bull," he writes to Staupitz, a month after, "with trembling and prayer; but I am now better pleased with that act than with any other of my whole life."†

The same wisdom marked the courageous obstinacy with which, in spite of entreaties, intimidations, and sickness, he persisted in presenting himself at the Diet of Worms. He alone, of all his party, seemed duly to appreciate the importance, the necessity, of that act to the safety of his great enterprise. At that critical moment, advance as well as retreat was full of danger; but the path of true policy, as well as of true magnanimity, was to advance. His obstinacy at this crisis has something absolutely sublime about it. While his enemies, more perspicacious than his friends, distrusted, and at last dreaded his appearance, employed all sorts of machinations to deter him, and plainly hinted that the road to Worms was the road to destruction, — while his friends, with a terrible remembrance of the fate of Huss, to whom even the Imperial safe-conduct had been no protection, painted, in appalling colors, the certain martyrdom to which he was exposing himself, — Luther remained inflexible. The repeated and varied forms in which he energetically expressed his purpose, showed the importance he attached to the act, and the obstinacy with which he had resolved upon it. Two are well known: "Should they light a fire which should blaze as high as heaven, and reach from Wittemberg to Worms, at Worms I will still appear." "Though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the houses, in would I go, — *noch woll ich hinein.*" But his letters, written on his progress thither, abound in expressions of the same inflexibility. "We come, my Spalatin," he writes from Frankfort. . . . . "We will enter Worms in spite of all the gates of hell, and all the powers of the air." * "Will you go on?" said the Imperial herald to him at Weimar, where they were placarding the Imperial edict against him. "I will," replied Luther, "though I should be put under interdict in every town, — I will go on."

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* De Wette, Vol. II. p. 94.

† Ibid., Vol. I. p. 543.

And his appearance and language at Worms did more to promote the cause of the Reformation than any other act, whether of preceding or succeeding years. He himself, as he repeatedly intimates in his correspondence, had serious apprehensions that his career would terminate at Worms, and evidently left it with much of the same feeling with which a man might find that he had got safely out of a lion's den. There is an obvious tone of hilarity in the letters dated immediately after his departure from the Diet, which contrasts oddly enough with regrets that he must escape, in temporary concealment, the honors of martyrdom. Witness the following to Luke Cranach, the painter, in which he ludicrously characterizes the proceedings of the Diet with all the point, brevity, and sarcastic energy, which he could so well assume: "I thought that his Imperial Majesty would have summoned some doctor, or some fifty, and eloquently confuted the monk. But nothing more is done than just this: 'Are these books thine?' 'Yes.' 'Will you retract them or not?' 'No.' 'Then get about your business.' *So heb dich.*"

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* De Wette, Vol. I. p. 587.

During the sittings of the celebrated Diet of Augsburg (held nearly ten years after that of Worms), Luther, it is well known, was persuaded to remain at Coburg, whence he watched with intense and, as his letters at this period so often testify, impatient interest, the proceedings of his less prompt and perspicacious colleagues. On this occasion he showed his thorough knowledge of the treacherous and crafty policy, the spirit of subtle intrigue, which had so often characterized Rome; those "Italian arts," — *Italitates* as he designates them, when speaking so many years before of the feigned cordialities of the Nuncio Miltitz, — which he dreaded for Melancthon more than violence, and of which the papal diplomacy was never more prodigal than on this occasion. While the timid Melancthon was "cutting and contriving" to perform impossibilities, to find a common measure of incommensurables, — "sewing new cloth upon old garments, and putting new wine into old bottles," — striving to diminish to an invisible line the interval between some of the doctrines of his adversaries and his own, and adopting all sorts of little artifices and convenient ambiguities of expression, to show the harmony of doctrines which must be eternally discordant, — Luther boldly remonstrates against a policy so ruinous; assures him that, whatever the apparent pliability of Rome, nothing but absolute submission would satisfy her imperious spirit; and that the true policy of the Reformers was what it had ever been, — that of uncompromising firmness. In the most energetic language, he denounces the vanity of all projects of verbal compromise; refuses all participation in acts which should have that object; and threatens to shiver in atoms any league by which Rome and Luther should be bound together. "I have received your Apology," he writes to Melancthon, "and wonder what you mean when you ask, What and how much should be conceded to the Pope? For myself, more than enough has already been conceded in that Apology; and if they refuse that, I see not what more I can possibly grant them." * And shortly after: "For myself, I will not yield a hair's breadth, or suffer any thing to be restored. I will rather endure every extremity. Let the Emperor do as he will." † And again, two days after, to Spalatin: "Hope not for agreement. If the Emperor will publish an edict, let him. *He published one at Worms!*" ‡ "Should it come to pass," he writes to the same friend a month after, "that you concede any thing plainly against the Gospel, and inclose that eagle in a vile sack, Luther (never doubt it), — Luther will come, and, in a magnificent fashion, set the noble bird free." § M. D'Aubigné's work has not yet reached this period; but there are no letters of Luther more interesting than the series which relate to the proceedings of this memorable Diet.

With such talents for the conduct of affairs, we need not wonder that the prudent Frederic so often sought his counsels; that Melancthon should have so eulogized his sagacity in his funeral panegyric; or that Cajetan should have wished to decline further encounters with him. "I will have nothing more to do with this beast, for he has deep-set eyes, and wonderful speculations in his head."

We have repeatedly stated, that the intellect of Luther did not particularly fit him for the investigation of abstract or speculative truth; but in all matters of a practical nature, — in all that concerned the management of affairs, or the conduct of life, — his judgment was both penetrating and profound. Hence, while nothing can be more flimsy than his metaphysics, nothing can be more generally sound than his practical judgments. Incapable of stating truth with philosophical precision, or laying it down with all its requisite limitations, he was a great master of that rough moral computation, which contents itself for practical purposes with approximate accuracy. This was especially the case in relation to that class of truths, in which a magnanimous mind, and lofty moral instincts, anticipate the lagging deductions of reason; and which are better understood and enforced by the heart than by the head. His writings abound in weighty and solid maxims, in which both the data and the demonstration are alike suppressed.

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* De Wette, Vol. IV. p. 52.

† Ibid., p. 88.

‡ Ibid., p. 92.

§ Ibid., p. 155.

To great sagacity, Luther also added, in a preëminent degree, that passionate earnestness of character which leads men not only to hold truth tenaciously, but to take every means in their power to diffuse, propagate, and realize it; to make it victorious. In Luther, no doubt, the principal spring of this impulse was depth of religious conviction; but the tendency itself is as much an element of character in some men, as the love of contemplation is in others. It is a form of ambition, — a noble one, it is true, — the ambition of intellectual dominion; and has actuated many a philosopher who flattered himself that he was single-eyed in his pursuit of wisdom. This warlike and polemic spirit is, no doubt, often most inconsistent with a calm and cautious survey of all the relations and details of great questions. But it is well for the world that there are some who, with speculative powers at least robust enough to enable them to seize large fragments of the truth, are immediately impelled to communicate it. Partial truth diffused is better than perfect truth suppressed, — better than stark ignorance and error, — better than that condition of things in which Luther found the world.

And if the vehemence, natural to such minds, sometimes precipitates the conclusions of reason, or substitutes prejudices for them, it is to be remembered that it will be long before the same earnestness and zeal, in contending for truth, will be manifested by those intellects which abstractedly are best qualified to investigate it. It would, doubtless, be very beautiful to see the tranquillity of the philosopher conjoined with the fire of the advocate, — first, intellect without passion, and then intellect with it. But it is a condition denied to us. If there be great energy of character, the processes of reason will often be precipitated or disturbed; if there be the coolness and equanimity of temperament which these require, the same qualities will unhappily continue to operate when their work is completed. The philosopher will still be apt to vindicate his character, and look most provokingly philosophic as to whether his views are effectually urged on mankind or not. Even if he become a zealous writer on their behalf, it still requires something more to encounter suffering for them; and while almost every religion has had those who have dared all and endured all in its defence, the annals of science scarcely present us with the name of a single authentic martyr. Philosophers have been illustrious benefactors of mankind; but it requires more energy of passion, and a sterner nature than generally falls to their lot, to ruffle it with the world, — to encounter obloquy, persecution, and death in defence of truth. Even Galileo was but too ready to recant when menaced with martyrdom, and to set the sun, which he had so impiously stopped, on his great diurnal journey again. It is true that he is said to have relapsed into heresy the moment after he had recanted, and drolly whispered, " But the earth does move though ! " Yet while the profession of error was uttered aloud, the confession of truth was made *sotto voce*. As Pascal says of the reservations of the Jesuits, *C'est dire la vérité tout bas, et un mensonge tout haut.*

Nor can it be said that the class of philosophers have in general been disposed to risk more, where truth has been practical and better calculated to influence the affections. The ancient philosophers are a notorious example of the contrary. They saw and scorned the puerilities of the ancient systems of superstition, but without vigorously attempting to destroy them, or to substitute better notions in their place. It was sufficient for them to make the convenient distinction between the *exoteric* and the *esoteric.* They could join in the popular rites with gravity of face and laughter in their hearts, and worship their gods and sneer at them at the same time.

The vehemence of Luther's passions, and the energy of his will, formed most remarkable features of his character, — as much so assuredly as any quality of his intellect, — and enabled him, in conjunction with that lofty confidence, that heroic faith, which seemed to take for literal truth the declaration, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," — to effect greater things than were probably ever effected by the same qualities before. Not only the pliant Melancthon yielded to the superior decision and energy of his nature, — as much, at least, as to his judgment, — but princes and nobles often yielded to it; and as to the common people, his confident bearing and resolute will achieved more than half his victory over them. In many instances, he seems to have made his way solely by the influence of an all-conquering enthusiasm and an inflexible purpose. His faith realized its own visions, and almost literally proved itself to be capable "of removing mountains."

On comparatively trivial occasions, and when in the wrong (not seldom the case), this intensity of passion, and inflexibility of purpose, must have made him no very pleasant coadjutor. Even the amiable Melancthon murmured after his death at the severity of that yoke, which, while Luther lived, he bore with much-enduring meekness. We wish, for Melancthon's own manhood, he had either murmured earlier or not murmured at all. But in a great crisis, and where the Reformer was in the right, the qualities of mind we are now considering exhibit him in aspects full of grandeur. His enthusiasm is heroic, his energy of will sublime. It is curious to contrast his almost childish obstinacy and rabid virulence, in relation to Zwingle and the Sacramentarians, with the dignity of his deportment, under the influence of similar inflexibility of character, before and at the Diet of Worms. It was with him as with many powerful minds, — great occasions calmed him ; the energy was commensurate to the objects which called it forth ; the weight upon the machine was proportional to its momentum ; and slow and majestic movement took the place of a self-destroying and turbulent force.

There was one peculiarity about Luther, of which we know not whether it most illustrates the robustness of his intellect, or the energy of his will, but it renders his character absolutely unique. We mean the rapidity and comparative ease with which he triumphed over the deepest prejudices of his age and education ; — Roman Catholics would doubtless say, over his happiest *prepossessions.* But this matters not to our present observation, which respects the singular character of the transformation, not its nature ; though Protestants have pretty well made up their minds, that, in all the great principles he so vigorously extricated and so boldly avowed, he showed as well the rectitude as the force of his understanding ; — in his advocacy, for example, of the supremacy of the Scriptures, and in his condemnation (under the guidance of that principle) of indulgences, of the monastic institute, of the celibacy of the clergy, of the mass, of the usurpations of the Pope. The spectacle is a noble one. The maxims and the institutes which he denounced with so much energy and confidence, had been consecrated by universal veneration, and were covered by the " awful hoar of ages." The prejudices which he vanquished had been instilled into his childhood, and they were retained till he reached manhood ; they were the prejudices of all his contemporaries ; they held dominion, not only over the most timid, but over the most powerful intellects ; they had bound even " kings in chains, and nobles in fetters of iron"; and almost every attempt, certainly all recent attempts to demolish them, had been crushed by a despotism which united the utmost degree of craft with the most ruthless employment of violence, and was the most compact and formidable the world ever saw. That he should have been able to denude himself of such prejudices, boldly to avow this great mental revolution, and give utterance to a series of novel and startling dogmas in opposition to them, is an example of independence and fearlessness of mind, which the world had never before witnessed.

Our wonder is still further increased, when we reflect that Luther himself was originally as passionate a devotee of the system he renounced, as he afterwards became of that for which he renounced it. Nor could he have been otherwise. The very depth and sincerity of his character forbade that he should hold any thing lightly; and whether he was right or wrong, he was always in earnest. While he was a Papist, he was a blind one; like Paul, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and, as touching the law, a Pharisee." He was none of those half-infidel ecclesiastics who abounded at Rome, and were the natural offspring of the age; men who saw through the superstition which they yet sanctioned, and conducted, with edifying solemnity of visage, the venerable rites at which they were all the while internally chuckling. He himself tells us (1539): "I may and will affirm with truth, that at the present time there is no Papist so conscientiously and earnestly a Papist as I once was!" He repeats this in various forms in his Letters.

The account of his youthful visit to Rome, as given by himself, confirms this statement. The profound veneration with which he approached the holy city; the passionate devotion with which he visited sacred places and engaged in public rites; the shock and revulsion of feeling with which he discovered that others were not so much in earnest as himself, — all show how sincerely he was then attached to the ancient system, and by what severe struggles his spirit must have shaken off its thraldom. The spectacle of this mental revolution is rendered still more imposing by the comparative rapidity with which it was effected. In 1516, Luther was still a zealous Papist; in October, 1517, he published his Theses against Indulgences, and in less than four years from that date, he had committed himself to a contest with Rome on all the great principles of the Reformation. How rapidly those principles disclosed themselves, as the controversy proceeded, is sufficiently clear from the examination of his correspondence. In a letter dated December 2, 1518, when expecting banishment by Frederic, he says to Spalatin: "If I remain here, I shall be without freedom of speech and writing; if I go, I will discharge my conscience, and pour out my life for Christ." A week after, he says: "I shall yet one day be a little freer against these Roman hydras." Three months later, he writes to Lange: "Our friend Eck is meditating new contests against me, and will compel me to do what I have often thought of; that is, by the blessing of Christ, to inveigh more seriously against these monsters. For, hitherto, I have but been playing and trifling in this matter." He repeats nearly the same words, a fortnight after, to Scheurl: "I have often said, that hitherto I have been trifling; but now more serious assaults are to be directed against the Roman pontiff and the arrogance of his ministers." In March, 1519, he made this memorable confession: "I am reading the pontifical decretals," (for the Leipsic disputation,) "and I know not whether the Pope is Antichrist himself, or only his apostle." In February, 1520, he writes: "I have scarcely a remaining doubt that the Pope is verily Antichrist, ... so well does he agree with him in his life, his acts, his words, and his decrees." On the 10th of July, soon after the appearance of the bull of condemnation, he says to Spalatin: "For me the die is cast, — *jacta est alea;* the papal wrath and papal favor are alike despised by me; I will never be reconciled to them, nor communicate with them more. Let them burn my writings. I, unless I am unable to get a little fire [doubtless alluding to the interdict], will condemn and publicly burn the whole pontifical code."

Perhaps, next to his journey to Worms, the two most daring acts of his life were the burning the papal bull, and his marriage. Of the former, and of the tremendous defiance it implied, we have already spoken. But the latter step required almost equal courage. His prejudices in relation to his monastic vows, as is seen by his correspondence, troubled him as much as any he had to vanquish. Nor had he vanquished them fully till his return from the Wartburg. When he resolved to marry (a resolution taken suddenly enough), one of his prime motives, if we may believe himself, was to give the utmost practical efficiency to his convictions, and encourage his followers in a conflict with a most powerful, because most distressing, class of associations. *Supposing* this his motive, it was certainly not only one of the boldest, but one of the most politic, expedients he could have adopted. He assures us, after giving other reasons for the step, that one was, "ut confirmem *facto* quæ docui, tam multos invenio pusillanimes in tantâ luce evangelii." *

That this was his principal motive, we may well doubt; with passions so strong as his, it was not likely to be more than coördinate with others. But that it was a very real motive, we may safely conclude: he was now past the heyday of passion, — was forty-two years old, — had lived in the most blameless celibacy, and had at first predestined his Catharine for another. Never did the cloister close upon one who was better qualified to appreciate and reciprocate the felicities of domestic life. As a husband and a father, his character is full of tenderness and gentleness; nor is there any part of his correspondence more interesting than his letters to his "Kate," and their "little Johnny"; or those in which he alludes to his fireside.

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* De Wette, Vol. III. p. 13.

The clamors of his adversaries showed how bold was the step on which he had ventured. "Nothing less than Antichrist," they said, "could be the fruit of the union of a monk and a nun." The taunt well justified the caustic sarcasm of Erasmus: "That there must already have been *many* Antichrists if *that* was the sole condition of their appearance."

Comparatively rapid as was Luther's conquest over his own prejudices, the revolution still required much time. It was in perfect analogy with similar revolutions in other minds. It was only more extensive and less gradual. Gradual such a change must ever be, from the limited capacities of our nature, and its law of progressive development. It would be not less absurd to suppose, that, when he first protested against Indulgences, he foresaw the results of that contest, than it would be to suppose that Cromwell anticipated his protectorate at the time of the battle of Newbury; or that Napoleon had already predestined himself to more than half the thrones of Europe when he entered on his Italian campaigns. As with them, so with Luther in his more hallowed enterprise, — the horizon continually widened as he climbed the hill. Nor was it, as the confessions of Luther abundantly prove, without severe struggles, and momentary vacillations of purpose, that he pursued his arduous way. This is especially seen in that wavering letter to the Pope, written at the suggestion of Miltitz, in which, in language which more than approached servility and adulation, he deprecated the anger of Leo, and declared that nothing was further from his purpose than to question the authority, or separate from the communion of Rome. We do not mean to affirm that Luther intended to deceive his enemies; such a course was foreign from his whole nature, and opposed to his ordinary conduct. Yet it is certain that, before this period, he had intimated his increasing doubts whether the Pope was not Antichrist, and his convictions that the war with Rome was but just commenced. We cannot defend the *servility* of the letter at all; and can only defend its *honesty*, on the supposition that it was written in one of those moments of vacillation to which we have adverted; with the wish, inspired by his recent conferences with the nuncio, that the controversy might be amicably set at rest, and with his mind almost exclusively bent on whatever promised such an issue.* Marvellously rapid as was the revolution in his mind compared with what might be expected, it was by repeated exorcisms, and terrible convulsions of spirit, that the legion of demons was expelled. The current did not flow all one way; it was the flux and reflux of a strong tide.

The very honesty of purpose and love of truth by which he was unquestionably actuated, prevented at all events any artificial obstacles to his progress. He did not attempt, as so many do, to reconcile inconsistencies and harmonize counter-declarations. He frankly acknowledged the fallibility of his nature,—his early errors and imperfect views. To every taunt of having receded from any position, he boldly said, in effect: "I thought so once; I was wrong. I think so no more. I appeal from Luther in ignorance, to Luther well informed." This was the case in relation to the memorable letter to which we have just referred. "I am truly grieved," says he, "that I *did* make such serious submissions; but, in truth, I then held respecting popes and councils just what is vulgarly taught us. . . . . But as I grew in knowledge, I grew in courage; and in truth they were at infinite pains to undeceive me, by an egregious display of their ignorance and flagitiousness."

One of the most striking facts in the correspondence of Luther, is the indication it affords of very early discontent with the prevailing system of theology, and the actual condition of the Church. It is evident that he was predestined to be a great reformer; that the germ of the Reformation existed in his bosom long before the dispute with Tetzel; and that, if the dispute respecting Indulgences had not led to its development, something else would. Even before Tetzel's "drum" was heard in the neighborhood of Wittemberg, he speaks with absolute loathing of the scholastic subtleties; expresses his conviction of the necessity of returning to a Scriptural theology; loudly contends for that doctrine of justification by faith which he afterwards made the lever of the Reformation; and expresses an abhorrence of Aristotle, which might more justly have been transferred to those dreaming commentators who had absurdly exalted a heathen philosopher into an oracle of the Christian Church. Most of these passages will be found in the two Histories so often mentioned.

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* Dr. Waddington has given an exceedingly fair and impartial statement on this subject.

It has often been matter of surprise, that the great contest of the Reformation should have turned upon so comparatively trivial a controversy as that which respected the Indulgences, — a point which was soon after absolutely forgotten. But it is not the first time that a skirmish of outposts has led to a general engagement. It may be added, that, insignificant as that one point may at first sight appear, it was most natural that the contest should begin there. And though the tide of battle rolled away from it, partly because even the hardihood of Rome could scarcely dare to defend such a post, and partly because the Reformers ceased to think of it in those more comprehensive corruptions which formed the object of their general assault, (in which, indeed, this particular abuse, with many others like it, originated,) it was not only the most natural point at which the conflict should begin, but it was improbable that it should *not* begin there. Habituated as men's minds were to the corruptions of the Church, steeped in superstition from their very childhood, it could only be by some revolting paradox that they could possibly be roused to think, examine, and remonstrate. The whole enormous expansion of the papal power had been but one long experiment on the patience and credulity of mankind. Each successive imposition was, it is true, worse than that which had preceded it; but when once it had fastened itself upon men's minds, and they had grown familiar with it, there was no further chance of awakening them from their apathy. Something further was needed, and a still more prodigious corruption must minister the hope of reformation. Now Indulgences, as proclaimed in the gross system of Tetzel, and of other spiritual quacks like him, was at once the ultimate and consistent limit of that huckstering in "merits," to which almost all the other corruptions of the Church had been more plausibly subservient; and formed just that startling exaggeration of familiar abuses which was necessary to awaken men's minds to reconsideration. The notion of selling pardons for sins, wholesale and retail, — of collecting into one great treasury the superfluous merits of the saints, and of doling them out by the pennyweight at prices fixed in the compound ratio of the necessities and means of the purchaser, — was a notion which, however monstrous, however calculated to awaken the drowsy consciences of mankind, was in harmony with the specious nonsense of works of supererogation, and the doctrine of penance. It was simply the substitution of the more valuable medium of solid coin for mechanical rites of devotion, tiresome pilgrimages, and acts of austerity; of golden chalices or silver candlesticks for scourges and horse-hair shirts; and, provided it implied the same amount of self-denial, what did it matter? The former plan was undeniably more profitable to Holy Church, and as to the penitent, few in our day but will admit that either plan was likely to be equally efficacious. The substitution of the merits of great saints for the transgressions of great sinners, or the remission of the pains of purgatory, might, for aught we can see, be as reasonably effected by pounds, shillings, and pence, as by walking twenty miles with pebbles in one's shoes.

The system of Indulgences, therefore, — in the grosser form in which such men as Tetzel proclaimed it, — was but the dark aphelion of the eccentric orbit in which the Church of Christ had wandered; and from that point it naturally began to retrace its path to the "fountain itself of heavenly radiance."

It may be said, perhaps, that the system of Indulgences had been proclaimed, under one modification or another, for more than a century and a half before Tetzel appeared, without producing any remarkable reaction. We answer, first, that they had seldom or never been proclaimed in so disgusting and offensive a form, or with such consummate impudence, as by Tetzel; and secondly, that the reception given even to the more cautious and limited exhibitions of the system, proves the truth of what we have been asserting; for it was always on this, as the most obvious and revolting corruption, that the earlier reformers and satirists of the Church most bitterly fastened. The moral instincts of such men, indeed, were not so vitiated as to render them insensible to the vices and profligacies of the ecclesiastical system generally; but the idea of bartering the justice and mercy of God himself for gold, naturally seemed the quintessence of every other corruption. What, indeed, could rouse mankind, if the spectacle of the ghostly peddler openly trafficking in his parchment wares of pardon for the past, and indulgence for the future, — haggling over the price of an insult to God, or a wrong to man, — letting out crime to hire, and selling the glories of heaven as a cheap pennyworth, — did not fill them with abhorrence and indignation? The contempt with which Chaucer's Pilgrims listen to the impudent offer of the Pardoner, well shows the feelings which such outrages on all common sense and every moral instinct could not fail to excite.

So gross was this abuse, that even the most bigoted Papists — Eck, for example — were compelled to denounce it; nor were there any more caustic satirists of it than some of themselves. Witness the witty comedy of Thomas Heywood, who, though a Catholic, hated the mendicant friars as heartily as any of his Protestant contemporaries. But no satire, however extravagant, could be a caricature of the follies and knaveries of this class of men. One of the wittiest sarcasms of the play is but a translation of Tetzel's impudent assertion, that "no sooner did the money chink in the box, than the souls for which it was offered flew up into heaven."

"With small cost and without any pain,
These pardons bring them to heaven plain;
Give me but a penny or two-pence;
And, as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or three quarters *at most*,
The soul is in heaven with the Holy Ghost."

And we doubt not that that most humorous chapter in the ancient and popular satire of Howleglass, in which that worthy enacts the part of a Franciscan friar, is little more than a literal version of the tricks of a class of men, of whom, knave as he was, he was but an insufficient representative.*

But though it was natural that the struggle of the Reformation should commence with Indulgences, it was impossible that it should end there. Luther soon quitted the narrow ground, and the mean antagonist, of his first conflicts, and asserted against that whole system of spiritual barter and merit-mongering, of which Tetzel's doctrine was but an extreme type, his counter principle of the perfect gratuitousness of salvation, — of "justification by faith alone." On his mode of exhibiting this great doctrine, we shall now offer a very few remarks.

With that pregnant brevity with which he knew so well how to express himself, he showed his sense of the importance of this doctrine, and its commanding position in the evangelical system, by describing it as *Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ.* He might more truly have called it so, if he had always duly guarded the statement of it; if, while repudiating the doctrine, under whatsoever modification, that the tribunal of heaven can be challenged, or its rewards achieved in virtue of deeds, of which every good man is himself the *first* to acknowledge the manifold imperfections, — much less by fantastical devices of human invention, destitute of all moral qualities, — he had uniformly connected his doctrine in *expression*, as he did in *fact*, with its just practical consequences. This, however, he did not do; and we are constrained to lament, with Mr. Hallam, the very frequent occurrence of exaggerated expressions, to which the critic gives the name of *Antinomian paradoxes.* We do not think, however, that even here Mr. Hallam has quite done the Reformer justice. He candidly admits, indeed, that Luther "could not mean to give any encouragement to a licentious disregard of moral virtue"; "though," he adds, "in the technical language of his theology, he might deny its proper obligation." * More truly, in our judgment, has Jortin, whose doctrinal moderation is well known, represented the matter in his Life of Erasmus: "Luther's favorite doctrine was justification by faith alone; but we must do him the justice to observe, that he perpetually inculcated the necessity of good works. According to him, a man is justified only by faith; but he cannot be justified without works; and where those works are not found, there is assuredly no true faith." And Melancthon, in a passage cited by Mr. Hallam himself, declares: "De his omnibus," (after enumerating with other doctrines the necessity of good works,) "scio re ipsa Lutherum sentire eadem, sed ineruditi quædam ejus φορτικωτερα dicta, cum non videant quo pertineant, nimium amant." Dr. Waddington truly remarks, that not even the strongest passages in Luther's treatise, "De Libertate Christianâ," prove that the author would deny the necessity of good works *except* as a means of justification; as a ground, in fact, of saying to the Divine Being, "You *must* reward me, — for I am entitled to it." In proof of this, Dr. Waddington cites the passage, "Non liberi sumus profidem Christi ab operibus, sed *ab opinionibus*

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* The same story is also found, with certain variations, in "Friar Gerund," and other fictions of the like class.

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* Introduction to the Literature of Europe, Vol. I. p. 416.

operum, *i. e.* a stulta præsumptione justificationis per opera quæsitæ. Fides enim conscientias nostras redimit, rectificat, et servat, qua cognoscimus justitiam esse non in operibus, *licet opera abesse neque possint neque debeant.*"

Every thing obviously depends on the *sense* in which Luther "would deny the necessity of good works." While he would have denied that any man can challenge "the free gift" of salvation (Scripture itself calls it by that name) as the "wages" of good works, he would as strenuously have affirmed that good works form the only real evidence and the necessary result of the possession of that "faith which justifies." With relation to the influence of the system he advocated, and the system he opposed, on practical morality, he would have said that the principal difference was, not that the former dispensed with it, but that it appealed mainly to totally different principles of our nature for its production; to the cheerful impulses of gratitude and hope, rather than to the "spirit of bondage" and the depressing influence of fear. And both philosophy and fact may convince us, that they are certainly not the least powerful impulses of the two.

But whatever Luther's early paradoxes on this subject, — of which we are by no means the apologists, and regret that there should have been so much cause for censure, — his later writings afford ample proof that he had corrected them. When Agricola had adopted and justified them in their unlimited form, and pushed them to their theoretic results, with a recklessness which perhaps first roused Luther to take alarm at their danger, the Reformer instantly assailed, refuted, and condemned him, and succeeded in compelling the rash theologian to retract. Several deeply interesting documents on this subject occur in the Correspondence,* which fully show that the faith which Luther made the basis of his theology was that of which the only appropriate evidence is holiness, and which necessarily creates it.

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* Vol. V.

Mr. Hallam admits that passages inconsistent with the extreme views he attributes to the Reformer may be adduced from his writings; but affirms, "that, in treating of an author so full of unlimited propositions, no positive proof as to his tenets can be refuted by the production of inconsistent passages." But the question is, whether these inconsistent passages ought not to modify those which establish the supposed "positive proof." If we are to pause at the unqualified reception of the one class of propositions, we may well pause also before the like reception of the other. If two statements, in a writer "much given to unlimited propositions," appear inconsistent, we should endeavor to make the one limit the other; and even if they are absolutely irreconcilable, we are hardly justified in taking either as the exclusive exponent of the writer's views, without the adjustment arising from a collation of passages. There are propositions of Scripture itself which may be, and which *have been*, as much wrested to the support of "Antinomian paradoxes," as almost any declarations of Luther could be.

Such a candid construction of Luther's real views seems to us the more necessary, precisely because, as Mr. Hallam justly says, he *is* so "full of unlimited propositions." It is ever the characteristic of oratorical genius to express the truths it feels with an energy which borders on paradox. Anxious to penetrate and exclusively occupy the minds of others with their own views and sentiments, such as eminently possess this species of genius are seldom solicitous to state propositions with the due limitations. It may be further remarked, that Luther's abhorrence of prevailing errors naturally increased this tendency; action and reaction, as usual, were equal; the liberated pendulum passed, as was to be expected, beyond the centre of its arc of oscillation. This we believe to be one principal cause of the many really objectionable statements of Luther on this subject.

Our veneration for the great Reformer, and the influence which even the errors of such a writer as Mr. Hallam are apt to exercise, must be our apology for the freedom of the preceding strictures. The work containing the observations upon which we have felt ourselves constrained thus to remark, is one for which all intelligent inquirers must always be largely indebted to its author, both for instruction and rational delight.

On the whole, few names have such claims on the gratitude of mankind as that of Luther. Even Rome owes him thanks; for whatever ameliorations have taken place in her system, have been owing far more to him than to herself. If there are any two facts which history establishes, it is the desperate condition of the Church at the time Luther appeared, and the vanity of all hopes of a self-sought and voluntary reformation. On the former we need not dwell, — for none now deny it; it appears not only on every page of contemporary history, but in all forms — especially the more popular — of mediæval literature. Never was a remark more just than that of Mr. Hallam, that the greater part of the literature of the Middle Ages may be considered as artillery levelled against the clergy.

Of the second great fact, — the hopelessness of any effective internal reform, — history leaves us in as little doubt. The heart itself was the chief seat of disease; and reformation must have commenced where corruption was most inveterate. Nor until certain long-forgotten principles should be reclaimed, and the Bible and its truths restored, — a result necessarily fatal to a system which was founded on their perversion, and which was safe only in their suppression, — could any reformation be either radical or permanent. It would be as nugatory as that which was sometimes directed against subordinate parts of the system, — Monachism, for instance. Again and again did reformation strive to purify that institute, and as often, after running through the same cycle of precisely similar changes, did it fall into the same corruptions. Each new order commenced with the profession, often with the reality, of voluntary poverty and superior austerity, and ended, as reputed sanctity brought wealth and power, in all the concatenated vices of the system. The reason is obvious; its *principles* were vicious, and hence the rapidity and uniformity of the decline, — one of the most remarkable and instructive phenomena of ecclesiastical history. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight"; and if man will attempt even a style of supposed virtue for which God never constituted him, he will meet with the same recompense as attends every other violation of the Divine laws.

For similar reasons, nothing but the recovery of principles fatal to the Papal System could be expected to effect the Reformation; and about these the champions of that system could not be expected to busy themselves. A usurper will hardly abdicate his own throne, however wrongfully gained.

Any reform which had merely touched externals, and left the essence of the system the same, would have been useless; the Church would soon have fallen back, like the purified forms of monasticism, into its ancient corruptions. Nor was it amongst the least proofs of the sagacity of Luther, that he so early perceived, and so systematically contended, that a reformation of doctrine — the restoration of evangelic truth — was essential to every other reform. But in fact, even the most moderate reforms, owing to the corruption of Rome itself, and its interest in their maintenance, were all but hopeless. Often did the Papal Court admit its own delinquencies, and as often evade their correction. The papal concessions on this point were a perpetual source of triumph to Luther and the Reformers. Even when a pope really sought some amendments, he found it impossible to resist the influences around him. Adrian, the successor of the refined and luxurious Leo, gave infinite disgust by the severity of his manners, and his sincere desire to see some sort of reformation; and his long catalogue of abuses which he wished to be corrected, delivered in at the Diet of Nuremburg, (and inconsistently accompanied with loud calls for the violent suppression of the Reformation,) was never forgiven by his own adherents. "The Church," said he, "stands in need of a reformation, but we must take one step at a time." Luther sarcastically remarked: "The Pope advises that a few centuries should be permitted to intervene between the first and second step."

Hence we may see the comparative futility of the small, timeserving expedients of Erasmus. His satire, bitter as it was, was not directed against the heart of the system, — he waged war only with the Friars. Not that we undervalue his labors; as a pioneer he was invaluable. Nor, if we except Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingle, do we know any man who reälly effected so much for the cause of the Reformation. The labors of Luther and himself terminated in one result; the streams, however different, flowed at last in one channel: —

"Ubi Rhodanus inges *amne prærapido* fluit,
Ararque *dubitans* quo suos fluctus agat."

Such are our deliberate views of the character, labors, and triumphs of Luther. We have been the more copious in our account of them, that we may do what in us lies to honor his memory, at a period when there is a large party of degenerate Protestants, who, not content with denying the unspeakable benefits which he conferred upon mankind, have not hesitated to speak of him with contempt and contumely, and in some cases even to question the honesty of his motives and the sincerity of his religion! *

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* "Some of the Oxford men," says Dr. Arnold, "now commonly revile Luther as a bold, bad man; how surely they would have reviled Paul!" — *Life and Correspondence*, Vol. II. p. 250.

GENIUS AND WRITINGS OF PASCAL.*

So much has been written of late years respecting Pascal, and so much that is worth reading, that we should scarcely have been induced to make him the subject of present criticism, had it not been for the appearance of the remarkable volumes of M. Faugère.

It seems strange to say, that the most popular work of an author who has been dead nearly two hundred years, and who has obtained a world-wide reputation, — a work which has passed through numberless editions, and been translated into most European languages, — has never been published in an authentic form till now. Yet this is strictly true of the "Pensées" of Pascal.

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* "Edinburgh Review," January, 1847.

1. *Des Pensées de Pascal. Rapport à l'Académie Française sur la nécessité d'une nouvelle édition de cet ouvrage.* Par M. V. Cousin. 8vo. Paris. 1843.

2. *Pensées, Fragments, et Lettres de Blaise Pascal: publiés pour la première fois conformément aux manuscrits originaux, en grande partie inédits.* Par M. Prosper Faugère. 2 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1844.

[This essay has been twice translated into French. The greater part of it first appeared in the "Révue Britannique," the conductors of which have conferred a similar honor on several others contained in this volume. M. Faugère, the editor of the "Pensées," having, as he thought, and not unreasonably, ground for complaint at the omission of certain passages, in which his labors had been applauded, published a new translation of the whole. As far as the author is able to judge, it is an admirable specimen of skill and fidelity in the very difficult operation of intellectual transfusion. It may be as well also to mention, that, since the appearance of the present essay, an entirely new translation of nearly the whole of Pascal's writings — all, in fact, except his strictly scientific writings — has been published by G. Pearce, Esq.]

It is hardly possible to convey to the reader a just idea of the merits of this improved edition, or the circumstances which led to it, without relating some of the more important incidents of Pascal's life. A formal biography, however, it cannot be necessary to give; for who has not read some account of the life of Blaise Pascal? It will be sufficient briefly to advert to the principal facts of this great man's history, and the dates of their occurrence.

He was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, in the year 1623, and died in the year 1662, at the early age of thirty-nine. When we think of the achievements which he crowded into that brief space, and which have made his name famous to all generations, we may well exclaim with Corneille, "A peine a-t-il vécu, quel nom il a laissé!"

It is well known that Pascal exhibited from the earliest childhood the most precocious proofs of inventive genius, especially in the department of mathematics. Having, if we may believe the universally received tradition, been purposely kept in ignorance of Geometry, lest his propensity in that direction should interfere with the prosecution of other branches of knowledge, his self-prompted genius discovered for itself the elementary truths of the forbidden science. At twelve years of age, he was surprised by his father in the act of demonstrating, on the pavement of an old hall, where he used to play, and by means of a rude diagram traced by a piece of coal, a proposition which corresponded to the thirty-second of the First Book of Euclid.* At the age of sixteen, he composed a little tractate on the Conic Sections, which provoked the mingled incredulity and admiration of

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* His sister, Madame Perier, has left an interesting and circumstantial account of this matter.

Descartes. At nineteen, he invented his celebrated Arithmetical Machine ; and at the age of six-and-twenty, he had composed the greater part of his mathematical works, and made those brilliant experiments in Hydrostatics and Pneumatics which have associated his name with those of Torricelli and Boyle, and ranked him amongst the first philosophers of his age. Yet, strange to say, he now suddenly renounced the splendid career to which his genius so unequivocally invited him, and abandoned himself to totally different studies. This was principally attributable to the strong religious impulse imparted to his mind at this period, — rendered deeper by early experience in the school of affliction. From the age of eighteen, he was a perpetual sufferer. In 1647, when only in his twenty-fourth year, he was attacked by paralysis. His ill health was mainly, if not wholly, occasioned by his devotion to study ; and of him it is literally true, that his mind consumed his body.

So complete was his abandonment of science, that he never returned to it but on one memorable occasion, and then only for a short interval. It was when he solved the remarkable problems relating to the curve called the Cycloid. The accounts which have been transmitted to us by his sister, of the manner in which these investigations were suggested and completed, — accounts which are authenticated by a letter of his own to Fermat, — strongly impress us with the vigor and brilliancy of his genius. We are assured that, after long abandonment of mathematics, his attention was directed to this subject by a casual train of thought suggested in one of the many nights which pain made sleepless. The thoughts thus suddenly originated, his inventive mind rapidly pursued to all the brilliant results in which they terminated ; and in the brief space of eight days the investigations were completed. Partly in compliance with the fashion of the age, and partly from the solicitation of his friend the Duke de Roannes, he concealed for a time the discoveries at which he had arrived, and offered the problems for solution to all the mathematicians of Europe, with a first and second prize to successful candidates. If no solution were offered in three months, Pascal promised to publish his own. Several were forwarded, but as none, in the estimation of the judges, completely fulfilled the conditions of the challenge, Pascal redeemed his pledge, under the name of Amos Dettonville, — an anagram of Louis de Montalte, the famous name under which the " Provincial Letters " had appeared. This was in 1658 – 9, when he was thirty-six years of age.

With this brief exception, Pascal may be said to have practically abandoned science from the age of twenty-six. Yet he did not at once become a religious recluse. For some years he lived a cheerful, and even gay, though never a dissipated life, in Paris, in the centre of literary and polite society, loved and admired by a wide circle of friends, and especially by his patron, the Duke de Roannes. To the accomplished sister of this nobleman, M. Faugère conjectures (as we think plausibly) that Pascal was secretly attached, but, from timidity and humility, " never told his love."

In part, probably, from the melancholy which this hopeless attachment inspired, but certainly much more in consequence of the deeper religious convictions, produced by a memorable escape from an appalling death, in 1654, his indifference to the world increased ; and he at length sought for solitude at Port Royal, already endeared to him by the residence there of his sister Jacqueline.

Here, it is well known, he produced his immortal " Provincial Letters " ; and, when death cut short his brief career, was meditating an extensive work on the fundamental principles of religion, — especially on the existence of God and the evidences of Christianity, — for the completion of which he required " ten years of health and leisure." An outline of the work had been sometimes (and on one occasion somewhat fully) imparted in conversation to his friends, but no part of it was ever completed. Nothing was found after his death but detached "Thoughts" (interspersed with some on other subjects) on the principal topics appropriate to such a work. They were the stones of which the building was to have consisted, many of them unhewn, and some few such as the builder, had he lived, would no doubt have laid aside. The form in which the Thoughts were put together comported but too well with their fragmentary character. It appears that he did not even use a commonplace book; but when, after profound meditation, any thought struck him as worth recording, he hastily noted it on any scrap of paper that came to hand, often on the backs of old letters; these he strung together on a file, or tied up in bundles, and left them till better health and untroubled leisure should permit him to evoke a new creation out of this chaos. It is a wonder, therefore, that the "Pensées" of Pascal have come down to us at all. Never, surely, was so precious a freight committed to so crazy a bark. The Sibyl herself was not more careless about those leaves, *rapidis ludibria ventis*, on which she inscribed her prophetic truths, than was Pascal about those which contained the results of his meditations. Of these results, however, we are in part defrauded, by something far worse than either the fragility of the materials on which they are inscribed, or their utter want of arrangement. Many of the "Thoughts" are themselves only half developed; others, as given us in the literal copy of M. Faugère, break off in the middle of a sentence, even of a word. Some casual interruption — frequently, no doubt, some paroxysm of pain, to which the great author, in his latter years, was incessantly subject — broke the thread of thought, and left the web imperfect for ever.

It is humiliating to think of the casualties which, possibly in many cases, have robbed posterity of some of the most precious fruits of the meditations of the wise; perhaps arrested trains of thought which would have expanded into brilliant theories of grand discoveries; — trains which, when the genial moment of inspiration has passed, it has been found impossible to recall; or which, if recalled up to the point at which they were broken off, terminate only in a wall of rock, in which the mountain path, which had been before so clearly seen, exists no longer. It is humiliating to think that a fit of the toothache, or a twinge of the gout, *might* have thus arrested — no more to return — the opening germ of conjecture, which led on to the discovery of the Differential Calculus, or the Theory of Gravitation. The condition of man, in this respect, affords, indeed, one striking proof of that combined "greatness and misery" of his nature, on which Pascal so profoundly meditated. It is wonderful that a being, such as he, should achieve so much; it is humiliating that he must depend on such casualties for success. On the precarious control which even the greatest men have over their own minds, Pascal himself justly says: "The mind of this sovereign of the world is not so independent as not to be discomposed by the first *tintamarre* that may be made around him. It does not need the roar of artillery to hinder him from thinking; the creaking of a vane or a pulley will answer the purpose. Be not surprised that he reasons ill just now; a fly is buzzing in his ears, — it is amply sufficient to render him incapable of sound deliberation. If you wish him to discover truth, be pleased to chase away that insect who holds his reason in check, and troubles that mighty intellect which governs cities and kingdoms! *Le plaisant dieu que voilà! O ridicolosissimo eroe!*" *

On the imperfect sentences and half-written words, which are now printed in the volumes of M. Faugère, we look with something like the feelings with which we pore on some half-defaced inscription on an ancient monument, — with a strange commixture of curiosity and veneration; and, whilst we wonder what the unfinished sentences may mean, we mourn over the malicious accident which has, perhaps, converted what might have been aphorisms of profoundest importance into a series of incoherent ciphers. One of the last things, assuredly, which we should think of doing with such fragments, would be to attempt to alter them in any way; least of all, to supplement them, and to divine and publish Pascal's meaning. There have been learned men, who have given us supplements to the lost pieces of some ancient historians; — erudite Freinsheimiuses, who hand us a huge bale of indifferent Latin, and beg us only to think it Livy's lost "Decades." But what man would venture to supplement Pascal? Only such, it may be supposed, as would feel no scruple in scouring an antique medal, or a worthy successor of those monks who obliterated manuscript pieces of Cicero, that they might inscribe them with some edifying legend.

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* Faugère, Tom. II. p. 54. It may be proper to observe, that all our citations from the "Pensées" are from this new and solely authentic edition.

Alas! more noted people than these were scarcely more scrupulous in the case of Pascal. His friends decided that the fragments which he had left behind him, imperfect as they were, were far too valuable to be consigned to oblivion; and so far all the world will agree with them. If, further, they had selected whatever appeared in any degree coherent, and printed these *verbatim et literatim*, in the best order they could devise, none would have censured, and all would have thanked them. But they did much more than this; or rather, they did both much more and much less. They deemed it not sufficient to give Pascal's Remains with the statement, that they were but fragments; that many of the thoughts were very imperfectly developed; that none of them had had the advantage of the author's revision, — apologies with which the world would have been fully satisfied; but they ventured upon mutilations and alterations of a most unwarrantable description. In innumerable instances, they changed words and phrases; in many others, they left out whole paragraphs, and put a sentence or two of their own in the place of them; they supplemented what they deemed imperfect with an exordium or conclusion, without any indication as to what were the respective ventures in this rare species of literary copartnery. It must have been odd to see this committee of critics sitting in judgment on Pascal's style, and deliberating with what alterations, additions, and expurgations it would be safe to permit the author of the "Provincial Letters" to appear in public. Arnauld, Nicole, and the Duke de Roannes were certainly no ordinary men; but they were no more capable of divining the thoughts which Pascal had not expressed, or of improving the style where he had expressed them, than of completing a sketch of Raphael.

It appears that, large as was the editorial discretion they assumed, or rather, large as was their want of all discretion, they had contemplated an enterprise still more audacious, — nothing less than that of completing the entire work which Pascal had projected, partly out of the materials he had left, and partly from what their own ingenuity might supply. It even appears that they had actually commenced this heterogeneous structure; and an amusing account has been left by M. Perier, both of the progress the builders of this Babel had made, and of the reasons for abandoning the design. "At last," says he, "it was resolved to reject the plan, because it was felt to be *almost* impossible *thoroughly* to enter into the thoughts and plan of the author; and, above all, of an author who was no more; and because it would not have been the work of M. Pascal, but a work altogether different, — *un ouvrage tout différent!*" Very different indeed! If this *naïve* expression had been intended for irony, it would have been almost worthy of Pascal himself.

M. Perier also tells us, that, if this plan had but been practicable, it would have been the most perfect of all; but he candidly adds, *il était aussi très-difficile de la bien executer.* But though the public was happily spared this fabric of porphyry and common brick, it will not be supposed by any reader of M. Cousin's "Rapport," or of M. Faugère's new edition of the "Pensées," that Pascal's editors did not allow themselves ample license. "En effet," says the former,

"toutes les infidélités qu'il est possible de concevoir, s'y rencontrent, — omissions, suppositions, altérations." . . . . . "J'ai donné des échantillons nombreux de tous les genres d'altérations, — altérations de mots, altérations de tours, altérations de phrases, suppressions, substitutions, additions, compositions arbitraires et absurdes, tantôt d'un paragraphe, tantôt d'un chapitre entier, à l'aide de phrases et de paragraphes étrangers les uns aux autres, et, qui pis est, décompositions plus arbitraires encore et vraiment inconcevables de chapitres qui, dans le manuscrit de Pascal, se présentaient parfaitement liés dans toutes leurs parties et profondément travaillés." *

Subsequent editors have taken similar liberties, if not so flagrant. While the original editors left out many passages from fear of the Jesuits, Condorcet, in his edition, omitted many of the most devout sentiments and expressions, under the influence of a very different feeling. Infidelity, as well as superstition, has its bigots, who would be well pleased to have their *index expurgatorius* also. † Unhappy Pascal! Between his old editors and his new, he seemed to be in the condition of the persecuted bigamist in the fable, whose elder wife would have robbed him of all his black hairs, and his younger of the gray. Under such opposite editing, it is hard to say what might not have disappeared at last.

It had been long felt that no thoroughly trustworthy edition of Pascal's "Thoughts" had yet been published; that none knew what was precisely his, and what was not. M. Cousin, in the valuable work from which we have just quoted, demonstrated the necessity of a new edition, founded upon a diligent collation of original manuscripts. This task M. Faugère has performed with incredible industry and exactitude, in the two volumes mentioned at the head of the present article. We must refer the reader to his interesting "Introduction" for the proof of this statement. There he has given the details of his editorial labors. Suffice it to say, that every accessible source of information has been carefully ransacked; every fragment of manuscript, whether in Pascal's own hand, or in that of members of his family, has been diligently examined; and every page offers indications of minute attention, even to the most trivial verbal differences. Speaking of the autograph MS. preserved in the Royal Library at Paris, a folio, into which the original loose leaves are pasted, or, when written on both sides, carefully let into the page, — *encadrès*, — he says: "We have read, or rather *studied*, this MS. page by page, line by line, syllable by syllable, from the beginning to the end; and, with the exception of some words which are illegible, it has passed entire into the present edition." As the public, in the former editions, did not exactly know what was Pascal's and what was not, M. Faugère has been compelled to do what, under other circumstances, it would not have been desirable, and indeed hardly just, to do, — what, indeed, any author of reputation would vehemently protest against in his own case. He has been obliged to give every fragment, however imperfect, *literatim et verbatim.* The extracts, as we have said, often terminate in the middle of a sentence, sometimes even of a word. As M. Vinet has justly observed in relation to this feature of M. Faugère's labors, Pascal himself would hardly have been satisfied "with either his old editors or the new." At the same time, it must be confessed, that, apart from this circumstance, it is deeply interesting to contemplate the first rude forms of profound or brilliant thought, as they presented themselves to the ardent mind of Pascal. This, M. Faugère has often enabled us to do, more especially in the singular collection of the rough notes for the "Provincial Letters."* It is like looking at the first sketch of a great painting of Raphael; or, as M. Vinet observes, "we are taken into the great sculptor's *studio*, and behold him at work, chisel in hand."

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* Rapport, Avant-Propos, pp. ii., ix.

† "Condorcet, par un préjugé contraire, supprima les passages empreints d'un sentiment de piété ou d'élévation mystique. . . . . . Par exemple, on ne retrouve pas, dans l'édition de Condorcet, ces pages ravissantes où Pascal, pénétrant dans les plus hautes régions du spiritualisme Chrétien, caractérise la grandeur de la sainteté et de la charité, comparée à la grandeur de la puissance et à celle de l'esprit." — FAUGÈRE, *Introduction*, pp. xxviii., xxix.

M. Cousin, we should think, must be satisfied with the accuracy and completeness of this edition; and also of the insufficiency of his own argument, that Pascal was, in fact, a "universal sceptic," who embraced the truths of religion, not as a hypocrite, indeed, but in the exercise of a blind faith, — in fact, in a sort of paroxysm of despair; as if he believed, that what he had proved false in physics was still true in morals, "that nature abhors a *vacuum*"! M. Cousin, in part, founds his theory on the fact, that the first editors had tamed down some of the more startling statements of Pascal, and omitted others; and seems to suppose that a new edition would reveal the sceptic in his full dimensions. He must now, we should think, see his error. There is little or nothing in the old editions, capable of proving Pascal's abiding conviction of the *sufficiency* of the evidence for the fundamental truths of religion, or the divine origin of Christianity, which does not reappear in the new, and with much new matter to confirm it. To this subject we shall return, after offering some observations on the genius and character of Pascal.

In one respect, his genius strongly resembled that of a recent subject of our criticism, — Leibnitz. His was one of the rare minds, apparently adapted, almost in equal measure, to the successful pursuit of the most diverse departments of philosophy and science, — of mathematics and physics, — of metaphysics and criticism. Great as was his versatility, it may be doubted whether in that respect he did not yield somewhat to Leibnitz, as also in his powers of acquisition, and most assuredly in the extent of his knowledge. It is not, however, to be forgotten, that he died at little more than half the age of the veteran philosopher of Germany; and there can be no doubt that, for his years, his attainments were very extensive. Still it is true, that that perfectly unique characteristic of Leibnitz, — his equal aptitude and appetite for reading and thinking, for the accumulation of knowledge and for original speculation, — could never have been in the same degree a characteristic of Pascal; and still less in such amazingly diversified directions. Pascal followed in this respect the predominant law of all very inventive minds. He was fonder of thought than of books, — of meditation than of acquisition. Even this tendency of mind manifested itself within a more restricted sphere; ample enough, it is true, — that of philosophy and theology. To Leibnitz, jurisprudence, history, and antiquities were nearly as familiar as these.

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* Tom. I. pp. 293-314.

But if the character of Pascal's genius was less excursive than that of Leibnitz, and the literary element in it far less active, these points of inferiority were amply compensated by a superiority in other qualities, in which there can be no comparison between them. In inventiveness, they may perhaps have been equal, — but even here, only in mathematics; in moral science, the science of man, we know of nothing out of Bacon, — who may be said to set all comparison at defiance, — certainly nothing in Leibnitz, that will bear comparison in depth, subtlety, and comprehensiveness, with some of the "Thoughts" of Pascal. But in another characteristic of true genius, — and which, for want of another name, we must call *felicity*, — neither Leibnitz, nor, it might almost be affirmed, any one else, can, in the full import of the term, be compared with Pascal. Endowed with originality the most active and various, all that he did was with *grace*. Full of depth, subtlety, brilliancy, both his thoughts and the manner in which he expresses them are also full of beauty. His just image is that of the youthful athlete of Greece, in whom was seen the perfection of physical beauty and physical strength; in whom every muscle was developed within the just limits calculated to secure a symmetrical development of all; the largest possible amount of power and flexibility in union.

In all the manifestations of Pascal's mind, this rare felicity is exuberantly displayed; — in the happy methods by which he lighted on truth and pursued scientific discovery; in the selection and arrangement of topics in all his compositions; in the peculiar delicacy of his wit, — so strongly contrasted with all the ordinary exhibitions of that quality, with which his coarse age was familiar; and, above all, in that indescribable elegance of expression which uniformly characterizes his finished efforts, and often his most negligent utterances, and which even time can do nothing to impair. Let us be permitted to say a word or two further on these topics.

In his scientific writings, the traces of this felicity may be discerned almost equally in the *matter* and the *form*. In relation to the former, there is probably a little illusion practised upon us. In reading his uniformly elegant and perspicuous exposition of his own scientific discoveries, we are apt to underrate the toil and intellectual struggles by which he achieved them. We know that they were, and must have been, attended with much of both, — nay, that his shattered health was the penalty of the intensity of his studies. Still, it is hardly possible to read his expositions without having the impression that his discoveries resembled a species of inspiration; and that his mind followed out the first germinant thought to its consequences, with more ease and rapidity than is usually exemplified. We can scarcely imagine it would have been necessary for him to have undergone the frightful toils of Kepler, had he been led into the same track of discoveries. And, in fact, whatever illusion his ease and elegance of manner may produce, we know that, comparatively speaking, his achievements were rapidly completed. It was so with the problems on the Cycloid; it was so with his discoveries in Pneumatics and Hydrostatics. In fact, though his "Traité de l'Equilibre des Liqueurs," and the one, "De la Pesanteur de l'Air," were not composed till 1653, they seem to have been only another form of the treatise he promised in his "Nouvelles Expériences touchant le Vide," published in 1647, and of which that tract was avowedly an abridgment. Indeed, as already said, Pascal had nearly quitted these investigations before the completion of his twenty-sixth year.

There was no scientific subject which Pascal touched, in which the felicity of his genius, the promptitude and brilliancy of his mind, did not shine forth. We see these qualities eminently displayed in his "Traité du Triangle Arithmétique,"—in the invention and construction of his Arithmetical Machine,—in the mode of solving the problems respecting the Cycloid, in which, while employing Cavalieri's "Method of Indivisibles," he proposes to remove the principal objection which had been made to it, by conceptions which bring him within a step of the Fluxions of Newton, and the Calculus of Leibnitz. The same qualities of mind are eminently displayed in the manner in which he establishes the hydrostatic paradox; and, generally, in the experiments detailed in the "Nouvelles Expériences," and the other connected pieces; most of all, in that celebrated *Crucial* experiment on the Puy-de-Dôme, by which he decided the cause of the suspension of the mercury in the barometrical tube. As there are few things recorded in the history of science more happily ingenious than the conception of this experiment, so never was there any thing more pleasantly *naïve* than the manner in which he proposes it, in his letter to M. Perier. "You doubtless see," says he, "that this experiment is decisive of the question; and that if it happen that the mercury shall stand lower at the top than at the bottom of the mountain (as I have many reasons for thinking, although all those who have meditated on this subject are of a contrary opinion), it will necessarily follow, that the weight and pressure of the air are the sole cause of this suspension of the mercury, and not the *horror of a vacuum;* since it is very certain that there is much more air to press at the base than on the summit of the mountain; while, on the other hand, we surely cannot say that nature abhors a vacuum more at the bottom of a mountain than on the top of it!" *

The usual felicity of his style is seen throughout his philosophical, as well as his other works. They appear to us to possess the highest merit which can belong to a scientific composition. It is true that, in his purely *mathematical* writings, — partly from the defective notation of his age, itself a result of the want of that higher Calculus, the invention of which was reserved for Newton and Leibnitz, — he is often compelled to adopt a more prolix style of demonstration than would have been subsequently necessary; but even here, and still more in all the fragments which relate to natural philosophy, his style is in striking contrast with the clumsy expression of the generality of contemporary writers. His Fragments abound in that perspicuous elegance which the French denominate by the expressive word *netteté.* The arrangement of thought and the turn of expression are alike beautiful. Probably no one ever knew so well when to stay his hand.

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* Descartes claimed the suggestion of this brilliant experiment. All we can say is, that Pascal, who was the very soul of honor, repeatedly declares, that he had meditated this experiment from the very time he had verified Torricelli's, and only waited the opportunity of performing it. On the other hand, Descartes was jealous of the discoveries of others, and, as Leibnitz truly observes, slow to give to them all the praise and admiration which were their due. With all his great powers, he had but little magnanimity. It is possible that he may have thought of a similar experiment, and that he may have conferred upon the subject with Pascal; but, if the latter speaks truth, it is impossible that he should not already have determined upon it. Indeed, it is hardly probable that, had it been originally a conception of Descartes, he would not have made the experiment for himself, and thus gained the honor undisputed and undivided. — Pascal was, in like manner, accused of having appropriated the honor of Torricelli's experiments. Nothing can be more perfectly beautiful than the manner in which he vindicates his integrity and candor, in his letter to M. de Ribeyre on this subject. He shows triumphantly, that, in his original "Nouvelles Expériences," he had not only not claimed, but had most distinctly disclaimed, all credit for the experiments in question, and had been at much pains to give honor where honor was due.

But it is, of course, in his writings on moral and critical subjects in which we should chiefly expect this felicity to appear ; and here we may well say, in the eloquent language of M. Faugère, it is a " style grand sans exagération, partout rempli d'émotion et contenu, vif sans turbulence, personnel sans pédantérie et sans amour-propre, superbe et modeste tout-ensemble " ; or, as he elsewhere expresses it, " tellement identifié avec l'âme de l'écrivain qu'il n'est que la pensée elle-même, parée de sa chaste nudité comme une statue antique." By the confession of the first French critics, the " Lettres Provinciales " did more than any other composition to fix the French language. On this point, the suffrages of all the most competent judges — of Voltaire and Bossuet, D'Alembert and Condorcet — are unanimous. " Not a single word occurs," says the first, " partaking of that vicissitude to which living languages are so subject. Here, then, we may fix the epoch when our language may be said to have assumed a settled form." " The French language," says D'Alembert, " was very far from being formed, as we may judge by the greater part of the works published at that time, and of which it is impossible to endure the reading. In the ' Provincial Letters ' there is not a single word that has become obsolete ; and that book, though written above a century ago, seems as if it had been written but yesterday." And as these Letters were the first model of French prose, so they still remain the objects of unqualified admiration. The writings of Pascal have, indeed, a paradoxical destiny ; — " flourishing in immortal youth," all that time can do is to superadd to the charms of perpetual beauty the veneration which belongs to age. His style cannot grow old.

When we reflect on the condition of the language when he appeared, this is truly wonderful. It was but partially reclaimed from barbarism, — it was still an imperfect instrument of genius. He had no adequate models, he was to create them. Thus to seize a language in its rude state, and compel it, in spite of its hardness and intractability, to become a malleable material of thought, is the exclusive prerogative of the highest species of minds: nothing but the intense fire of genius can fuse these heterogeneous elements, and mould them into forms of beauty. As a proof, it may be remarked, that none but the highest genius *has* ever been equal to this task. Genius of less than the first order will often make improvements in the existing state of a language, and give it a perceptible impulse; but none but the most creative and plastic power can at once mould a rude language into forms which cannot become obsolete, — which remain in perpetuity a part of the current literature, amidst all the changes of time and the sudden caprices of fashion. Thus it required a Luther to mould the harsh German into the language of his still unrivalled translation of the Scriptures; in which, and in his vernacular compositions, he first fairly reclaimed his native language from its wild state, brought it under the yoke, and subjected it to the purposes of literature. Pascal was in a similar manner the creator of the French. Yet each performed his task in a mode as characteristic, as the materials on which they operated were different. Energy was the predominant quality of Luther's genius; beauty, of Pascal's. The rugged German, under the hand of Luther, is compelled to yield to an irresistible application of force; it is the lightning splitting oak and granite. The French, under that of Pascal, assumes forms of beauty by a still and noiseless movement, and as by a sort of enchantment; it is "the west wind ungirding the bosom of the earth, and calling forth bud and flower at its bidding."

It may be thought strange by some, that this complete mastery of an unformed language should be represented, not only as so signal a triumph, but as an index of the highest genius. But it will not appear unphilosophical to those who duly consider the subject. If, even when language has reached its full development, we never see the full capacities of this delicate instrument put forth except by great genius, how can we expect it when the language is still imperfect? As used in this rude state, language resembles the harsh music of the Alpine horn, blown by the rude Swiss herd-boy: it is only when the lofty peaks around take it up, that it is transmuted by their echoes into exquisite melody.

The severely pure and simple taste which reigns in Pascal's style seems, when we reflect on those vices which more or less infected universal letters, little less than a miraculous felicity. One wonders by what privilege it was that he freed himself from the contagion of universal example, and rose so superior to his age. Taste was yet almost unfelt; each writer affected extravagance of some kind or other; — strained metaphor, quaint conceits, far-fetched turns of thought, unnatural constructions. These were the vices of the day; not so much perhaps in France as in England, but to a great extent in both. From all these blemishes Pascal's style is perfectly free; he anticipated all criticism, and became a law to himself. Some of his observations, however, show that his taste was no mere instinct; they indicate how deeply he had revolved the true principles of composition. His "thoughts" "sur l'Eloquence et le Style" * are well worth the perusal of every writer and speaker. In one of them he profoundly says: "The very same sense is materially affected by the words that convey it. The sense receives its dignity from the words, rather than imparts it to them." In another, he says: "All the false beauties that we condemn in Cicero have their admirers in crowds." And, in a third, he admirably depicts the prevailing vice of strained antitheses. "Those," says he, "who frame antitheses by forcing the sense, are like men who make false windows for the sake of symmetry. Their rule is not to speak justly, but to make just figures." The time spent on his own compositions shows that even such felicity as his own could not dispense

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* Faugère, Vol. I. p. 249.

with that toil, which is an essential condition of all perfect writing, — indeed of all human excellence; and affords one other proof of the extreme shallowness of that theory which would have us believe that, to attain success, genius alone is all-sufficient. He is said, when engaged on his "Lettres Provinciales," to have sometimes employed twenty days in perfecting a single letter.

Another circumstance which, as already intimated, indicates Pascal's felicity of genius, is the peculiar delicacy and refinement of his *wit*. We say its delicacy and refinement, for the mere conjunction of great wit with great aptitude for science cannot be considered as a felicity peculiar to Pascal. It is the *character* of that wit. The conjunction of distinguished wit, in one or other of its many forms, with elevated genius, is far too common to be regarded as a peculiarity of his mind. Paradoxical as the statement may at first sight appear to many who have been accustomed to consider wisdom and wit as dwelling apart, it may be doubted whether there is any one attribute so common to the highest order of mind, whether scientific or imaginative, as some form or other of this quality. The names of Bacon, Shakspeare, Plato, Pascal, Johnson, Byron, Scott, and many more, will instantly occur to the reader. It is true that the history of our species reveals to us minds either really adapted so exclusively to the abstrusest branches of science, or so incessantly immersed in them, that, if they possessed the faculty of wit at all, it was never developed. Aristotle and Newton — though some few sayings of the former which tradition has preserved are not a little racy — may be named as examples. But, in general, — and the whole history of science and literature will show it, — this attribute, in one or other of its thousand varieties, has formed an almôst perpetual accompaniment of the finest order of minds. And we may add, that, *a priori*, we should expect it to be so. That same activity of suggestion, and aptitude for detecting resemblances, analogies, and differences, which qualify genius for making discoveries in science, or, under different modifications, for evoking the creations of imagination, may well be supposed not to desert their possessor, when, for playful purposes, and in moments of relaxation, he exercises himself in the detection of the analogies on which wit and drollery are founded. Yet, clear as this truth seems to be, and strongly as it is corroborated by the history of genius, the opposite opinion has been, we believe, oftener expressed, and the highest order of mind pronounced incompatible with such a conjunction.

It is not, then, the activity, but the peculiar delicacy of Pascal's wit, which renders this feature of his genius so truly worthy of admiration ; — the more admirable, when it is remembered that the wit of that age, and especially among polemics, so generally took the form of gross scurrility and buffoonery ; and, even when it did not sink so low as that, was overgrown with every species of quaintness and affectation. Almost in no instance was it found pure from one or other of these debasements. The wit of Pascal, on the contrary, appears even now exquisitely chaste and natural, — attired in a truly Attic simplicity of form and expression. In one quality — that of irony — nothing appears to us to approach it, except what we find in the pages of Plato, between whom and Pascal (different, and even opposite, as they were in many respects) it were easy to trace a resemblance in other points besides the character of their wit. Both possessed surpassing acuteness and subtlety of genius in the department of abstract science, — both delighted in exploring the depths of man's moral nature, — both gazed enamored on the ideal forms of moral sublimity and loveliness, — both were characterized by eminent beauty of intellect, and both were absolute masters of the art of representing thought, — each with exquisite refinement of taste, and all the graces of language. The Grecian, indeed, possessed a far more opulent imagination, and indulged in a more gorgeous style, than the Frenchman ; or rather, Plato may be said to have been a master of all kinds of style. His dramatic powers, however, in none of his dialogues, can be greater than those which Pascal has displayed in his "Lettres Provinciales." Nothing could be apter for the purpose, — that of throwing into strong light the monstrous errors of the system he opposed, — than the machinery the author has selected. The affected ignorance and *naïveté* of M. Montalte, in quest of information respecting the theological disputes of the age, and especially the doctrines of the Jesuits, — the frankness of the worthy Jesuit father, of whom he seeks instruction, and who, in the boundless admiration of his order, and the hope of making a convert, details without hesitation, or rather with triumph, the admirable contrivances by which their casuists had, in fact, inverted every principle of morals, and eluded all the obligations of Christianity, — the ironical compliments of the supposed novice, intermingled with objections and slightly expressed doubts, all delivered with an air of modest ingenuousness, which humbly covets further light, — the arch simplicity with which he involves the worthy father in the most perplexing dilemmas, — the expressions of unsophisticated astonishment, which but prompt his stolid guide eagerly to make good every assertion by a proper array of authorities, — a device which, as Pascal has used it, converts what would have been in other hands only a dull catalogue of citations into a source of perpetual amusement, — the droll consequences which, with infinite affectation of simplicity, he draws from the Jesuit's doctrines, — the logical exigencies into which the latter is thrown in the attempt to obviate them, — all these things, managed as only Pascal could have managed them, render the book as amusing as any novel. The form of letters enables him at the same time to intersperse, amidst the conversations they record, the most eloquent and glowing invectives against the doctrines he exposes. Voltaire's well known panegyric does not exceed the truth, — "that Molière's best comedies do not excel them in wit, nor the compositions of Bossuet in sublimity." "This work," says D'Alembert, "is so much the more admirable, as Pascal, in composing it, seems to have *theologized* two things which seem not made for the theology of that time, — language and pleasantry."

The success of the work is well known. By his inimitable pleasantry, Pascal succeeded in making even the dullest matters of scholastic theology and Jesuitical casuistry as attractive to the people as a comedy; and, by his little volume, did more to render the formidable Society the contempt of Europe, than was ever done by all its other enemies put together.

The Jesuits had nothing for it but to inveigh against the Letters as "the immortal liars," — *les menteurs immortelles.* To their charge of having garbled citations, and tampered with evidence in order to produce an unfair impression against the Society, (practices utterly abhorrent from all Pascal's habits of mind and dispositions of heart,) he replies, with the characteristic boldness and frankness of his nature: "I was asked if I repented of having written 'Les Provinciales.' I reply, that, far from having repented, if I had to write them now, I would write yet more strongly. I was asked why I have given the names of the authors from whom I have taken all the abominable propositions I have cited. I answer, that if I lived in a city where there were a dozen fountains, and that I certainly knew that there was one which was poisoned, I should be obliged to advertise all the world to draw no water from that fountain; and as they might think that it was a pure imagination on my part, I should be obliged to name him who had poisoned it, rather than expose all the city to the danger of being poisoned by it. I was asked why I had employed a pleasant, jocose, and diverting style. I reply, that if I had written in a dogmatical style, it would have been only the learned who would have read, and they would have had no necessity to do it, being at least as well acquainted with the subject as myself: thus, I thought it a duty to write so as to be comprehended by women and men of the world, that they might know the danger of those maxims and propositions which were then universally propagated, and of which they permitted themselves to be so easily persuaded. I was asked, lastly, if I had myself read all the books I have cited. I answer, No; for in that case it would have been necessary to have passed my life in reading very bad books; but I had read through the whole of Escobar twice, and, for the others, I caused them to be read by my friends. But I have never used a single passage without having myself read it in the book cited, or without having examined the subject on which it is adduced, or without having read both what precedes and what follows it, in order that I might not run the risk of quoting what was, in fact, an objection for a reply to it, — which would have been censurable and unjust."

The moral aspects of Pascal's character are as inviting as those of his intellect: here, too, he was truly great. Some infirmities, indeed, he had, for he was no more than man: he is nevertheless one of the very few who as passionately pursue the acquisition of moral excellence, as the quest after speculative truth; who, practically as well as theoretically, believe that the highest form of humanity is not intellect, but goodness. Usually it is far otherwise; there is no sort of proportion between the diligence and assiduity which men are ordinarily willing to expend on their own intellectual and moral culture. Even of those who are in a good degree under the influence of moral and religious principles, and whose conduct in all the more important instances of life shows it, how few are there who make that comprehensive rectitude, the obligation of which they acknowledge, and the ideal of which they admire, the *study* of their lives, the rule of their daily actions in little things as well as great; who analyze their motives, or school their hearts, in relation to the habitual expressions of thought and feeling, in conscious obedience to it! Nor is it less than an indication of something wrong about human nature, a symptom of spiritual disease, that of those three distinct orders of "greatness," which Pascal has so exquisitely discriminated in his "Pensées," — power, intellect, and goodness, — the admiration inspired by the two first should be so much greater than that inspired by the last. The reverence for genius, in particular, often degenerates into a species of idolatry ; so much so, as to lead to the proverbial, but most culpable, extenuation of grave faults on the part of biographers, who cannot bear to see a spot on the bright luminary they admire ! Even if moral excellence be theoretically allowed to claim equal enthusiasm of admiration, it rarely receives it. How vivid, after all, is the sentiment which the intellect of a Bacon or a Shakspeare usually excites in the young and ardent, compared with that with which they regard a Howard or a Martyn! Yet invincible patience, heroic constancy, that honesty of purpose which is proof against all flatteries and all menace, perfect candor, the spirit of unfeigned humility, benevolence, and charity, are surely not less worthy of our most enthusiastic admiration, than those qualities of mind which prompt the discoveries of the philosopher, or inspire the strains of the poet.

It is one of the proofs, according to Paley's ingenious remark, of the originality of the Gospel, and one of the marks of the divinity of its origin, that it chiefly insists on the cultivation of an order of virtues which had been least applauded by man, and in which, as that very fact would indicate, man was most deficient ; of humility, meekness, patience, rather than of those opposite virtues to which the active principles of his nature would most readily prompt him, and which have been accordingly the chief objects of culture and admiration. We may extend the remark, and observe, that it is an equal indication of the originality of the Gospel and of the divinity of its origin, that the *ideal* of greatness which it has presented to us, is of a different character from that which has chiefly fixed the enthusiastic gaze of man. It is not one in which power and intellect constitute the predominant qualities, associated with just so much virtue as serves to make the picture free from all grave reproach ; but the perfection of truth, rectitude, and love,— to which even the attributes of superhuman power and superhuman wisdom, with which they are blended, are so wonderfully subordinated, that they seem, as they are, intrinsically of inferior lustre. Glorious as is their light, it is absolutely quenched in the brighter effulgence of ineffable and supernal goodness. We think of Cæsar as the great warrior and the great statesman; of Shakspeare as the great poet; of Newton as the great philosopher: when the Christian thinks of his Master, though he *believes* him to be possessed of immeasurably greater power and wisdom than theirs,—his first, last thought is, that he is THE GOOD.

The character of *greatness* in Christ, Pascal has beautifully touched. "The distance between Matter and Mind typifies the infinitely greater distance between Mind and Love. . . . . . All the *éclat* of external greatness has no lustre for men profoundly engaged in intellectual researches. . . . . . *Their* greatness, again, is invisible to the noble and the rich. . . . . . Great geniuses have their empire, their splendor, their victory, their renown. . . . . . These are seen with the eyes of the mind, and that is sufficient. . . . . . Holy men, again, have *their* empire, *their* victory, and *their* renown. . . . . . Archimedes would have been venerable even without rank. He gained no battles; but to the intellectual world he has bequeathed great discoveries. How illustrious does he look in *their* eyes! . . . . . In like manner Jesus Christ, without external splendor, without the outward repute of science, is great in his own order of holiness. . . . . . It had been idle in Archimedes to have insisted on his royal descent in his books of geometry. And it had been as useless for our Lord Jesus Christ to assume the state of a king for the purpose of giving splendor to his reign of holiness. But he came fully invested with the lustre of his own order."

Few men have ever dwelt on this ideal of moral perfection, or sought to realize its image in themselves, with more ardor than Pascal,—not always, indeed, as regards the mode, with as much wisdom as ardor. Yet, upon all the great features of his moral character, one dwells with the serenest delight. Much as he is to be admired, he is yet more to be loved. His humility and simplicity, conspicuous as his genius and acquisitions, were those of a very child. The favorite of science, — repeatedly crowned, as an old Greek might have said of some distinguished young hero at Olympia, with the fairest laurels of the successful mathematician and the unrivalled polemic, — making discoveries even in his youth which would have intoxicated many men even to madness, — neither pride nor vanity found admission to his heart. Philosophy and science produced on him only their proper effect, and taught him, not how much he knew, but how little; not merely what he had attained, but of how much more he was ignorant. His perfect love of truth was beautifully blended with the gentlest charity; and his contempt of fraud and sophistry never made him forget, while indignantly exposing them, the courtesies of a gentleman and the moderation of the Christian: and thus the severest raillery that probably ever fell from human lips, flows on in a stream undiscolored by one particle of malevolence, and unruffled by one expression of coarseness or bitterness. The transparency and integrity of his character not only shone conspicuous in all the transactions of his life, but seem even now to beam upon us as from an open ingenuous countenance, in the inimitable frankness and clearness of his style. It is impossible to read the passages in his philosophical writings, in which he notices or refutes the calumnies to which he had been exposed, — by which it was sometimes sought to defraud him of the honor of the discoveries he had made, and in one instance to cover him with the infamy of appropriating discoveries which had been made by others, — without being convinced of the perfect candor and uprightness of his nature.* His generosity and benevolence were unbounded; so much so, indeed, as to become almost vices by excess; passing far beyond that mean in which the Stagyrite fixes the limits of all virtue. He absolutely beggared himself by his prodigal benefactions; he did what few do, — mortgaged even his expectancies to charity. To all which we may add, that he bore the prolonged and excruciating sufferings of his latter years with a patience and fortitude which astonished all who witnessed them.

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* See more particularly his letters to Father Noel, M. le Pailleur, and M. de Ribeyre.

The failings of Pascal — for to these we must advert — were partly the result of that system of faith in which he had been educated, and which, though he did so much to expose many of the worst enormities which had attached themselves to it, still exercised considerable influence over him. It is lamentable to see such a mind as his surrendering itself to some of the most grievous extravagances of asceticism. Yet the fact cannot be denied; nor is it improbable that his life — brief perhaps at the longest, considering his intense study and his feeble constitution — was yet made more brief by these pernicious practices. We are told, not only that he lived on the plainest fare, and performed the most menial offices for himself; not only that he practised the severest abstinence and the most rigid devotions; but that he wore beneath his clothes a girdle of iron, with sharp points affixed to it; and that, whenever he found his mind disposed to wander from religious subjects, or take delight in things around him, he struck the girdle with his elbow, and forced the sharp points of the iron into his side. We even see but too clearly that his views of life, to a considerable extent, became perverted. He cherished mistrust even of its blessings, and acted, though he meant it not, as if the very gifts of God were to be received with suspicion, — as the smiling tempters to evil, the secret enemies of our well-being. He often expresses himself as though he thought, not only that suffering is necessary to the moral discipline of man, but as though nothing but suffering is at present safe for him. "I can approve," he says in one place, "only of those who seek in tears for happiness." "Disease," he declares in another place, "is the natural state of Christians." It is evident that the great and gracious Master, in whose school we all are, and whose various dispensations of goodness and severity are dictated by a wisdom greater than our own, does not think so. If he did, health would be the exception, and disease the rule. It is but too true, indeed, that not only is suffering necessary to teach us our feebleness and dependence, and to abate the pride and confidence of our nature, but that we are but too apt to forget, with the return of prosperity, all the wise reflections and purposes which we had made in sorrow. Jeremy Taylor likens us, in one of his many fanciful images, to the fabled lamps in the tomb of Terentia, which "burned under ground for many ages together," but which, as soon as ever they were brought into the air and saw a brighter light, went out in darkness. "So long as we are in the retirements of sorrow, of want, of fear, of sickness, we are burning and shining lamps; but when God lifts us up from the gates of death, and carries us abroad into the open air, to converse with prosperity and temptations, we go out in darkness, and we cannot be preserved in light and heat, but by still dwelling in the regions of sorrow." There is beauty, and, to a certain extent, truth, in the figure; but it by no means follows that continuous suffering would be good for man. On the contrary, it would be as remote from producing the perfection of our moral nature, as unmitigated prosperity. It would be apt to produce a morbid and ghastly piety; the "bright lamps" of which Taylor speaks would still irradiate — only a tomb.

Since the end of suffering, as a moral discipline, is to enable us at last to bear unclouded happiness, what guaranty can we now have of its beneficial effect on us, except by partial experiments of our capacity of recollecting and practising the lessons of adversity in intervals of prosperity? It is true that there is no more perilous ordeal through which man can pass, — no greater curse which can be imposed on him, as he is at present constituted, — than that of being condemned to walk his life long in the sunlight of unshaded prosperity. His eyes ache with that too untempered brilliance, — he is apt to be smitten with a moral *coup de soleil.* But it as little follows that no sunshine is good for us. He who made us, and who tutors us, alone knows what is the exact measure of light and shade, sun and cloud, storm and calm, frost and heat, which will best tend to mature those flowers which are the object of his celestial husbandry; and which, when transplanted into the paradise of God, are to bloom there for ever in amaranthine loveliness. Nor can it be without presumption that we essay to interfere with these processes; our highest wisdom is to fall in with them. And certain it is that every man will find by experience that he has enough to do, to bear with patience and fortitude the *real* afflictions with which God may visit him, without venturing to fill up the intervals in which He has left him ease, and even invites him to gladness, by a self-imposed and artificial sorrow. Nay, if his mind be well constituted, he will feel that the learning how to apply, in hours of happiness, the truths which he has pondered in the school of sorrow, is not one of the least difficult lessons which sorrow has to teach him; not to mention that the grateful reception of God's gifts is as true a part of duty, and even a more neglected part of it, than a patient submission to his chastisements.

It is at our peril, then, that we seek to interfere with the discipline which is provided for us. He who acts as if God had mistaken the proportions in which prosperity and adversity should be allotted to us, — and seeks by hair-shirts, prolonged abstinence, and self-imposed penace, to render more perfect the discipline of suffering, — only enfeebles, instead of invigorating, his piety; and resembles one of those hypochondriacal patients — the plague and torment of physicians — who, having sought advice, and being supposed to follow it, are found not only taking their physician's well-judged prescriptions, but secretly dosing themselves in the intervals with some quackish nostrum. Thus it was even with a Pascal, — and we cannot see that the experiment was attended in his case with any better effects.

It is indeed pitiable to read, that during his last days his perverted notions induced him to refrain from the natural expressions of fondness and gratitude towards his sisters and attendants, lest that affection with which they regarded him should become inordinate ; lest they should transfer to an earthly creature the affection due only to the Supreme. Something like an attempted justification of such conduct, indeed, occurs in his "Pensées." "Il est injuste qu'on s'attache à moi, quoiqu'on le fasse avec plaisir et volontairement. Je tromperais ceux à qui j'en ferais naître le désir ; car je ne suis la fin de personne, et n'ai pas de quoi les satisfaire. Ne suis-je pas prêt à mourir ? Et ainsi l'objet de leur attachment mourra donc. Comme je serais coupable de faire croire une fausseté, quoique je la persuadasse doucement et qu'on la crût avec plaisir, et qu'en cela on me fît plaisir ; de même je suis coupable de me faire aimer."* Madame Perier has cited this passage in the life of her brother, as accounting for his apparent coldness to herself.†

It is wonderful that a mind so powerful as his should be misled by a pernicious asceticism to adopt such maxims ; it is still more wonderful, that a heart so fond should have been able to act upon them. To restrain, even in his dying hours, expressions of tenderness towards those whom he so loved, and who so loved him, — to simulate a coldness which his feelings belied, — to repress the sensibilities of a grateful and confiding nature, — to inflict a pang by affected indifference on hearts as fond as his own, — here was indeed a proof of the truth upon which he so passionately meditated, the "greatness and the misery" of man, of his strength and his weakness; weakness in supposing that such perversion of all nature could ever be a dictate of duty, strength in performing, without wincing, a task so hard. The American Indian bearing unmoved the torture of his enemies exhibits not, we may rest assured, greater fortitude than Pascal, when, with such a heart as his, he received in silence the last ministrations of his devoted friends, and even declined, with cold and averted eye, the assiduities of their zealous love.

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* Tom. I. p. 198.

† The passage of Madame Perier is deeply affecting. "Meanwhile, as I was wholly a stranger to his sentiments on this point, I was quite surprised and discouraged at the rebuffs he would give me upon certain occasions. I told my sister of it, and not without complaining, that my brother was unkind, and did not love me ; and that it looked to me as if I put him in pain, even at the very moment I was studying to please him, and striving to perform the most affectionate offices for him in his illness." — *Madame Perier's Memoirs of Pascal.*

That same melancholy temperament which, united with a pernicious asceticism, made him avert his gaze even from innocent pleasures, and suspect a serpent lurking in every form of pleasure, also gave to his *representations* of the depravity of our nature an undue intensity and Rembrandt-like depth of coloring. His mode of expression is often such, that, were it not for what we otherwise know of his character, it might almost be mistaken for an indication of misanthropy. With this vice, accordingly, Voltaire does not hesitate to tax him.

> "Ce fameux écrivain, misanthrope sublime."

Nothing can be more unjust. As to the *substance* of what Pascal has said of human frailty and infirmity, most of it is at once verified by the appeal to individual consciousness; and as to the *manner*, we are not to forget that he everywhere dwells as much upon the "greatness" as upon the "misery" of man. "It is the ruined archangel," says Hallam, with equal justness and beauty, "that Pascal delights to paint." It is equally evident that he is habitually inspired by a desire to lead man to truth and happiness; nor is there any thing more affecting than the passage with which he closes one of his expostulations with infidelity, and which M. Cousin finely characterizes as "une citation glorieuse à Pascal." "This argument, you say, delights me. If this argument pleases you, and appears strong, know that it proceeds from one, who, both before and after it, fell on his knees before that Infinite and Invisible Being to whom he has subjected his whole soul, to pray that He would also subject *you* to Himself for your good and for His glory; and that thus omnipotence might give efficacy to his feebleness."

In addition to this, it must be said, that, in his most bitter reflections, this truly humble man is thinking as much of himself as of others, and regards Blaise Pascal as but a type of the race whose degeneracy he mourns. His most bitter sarcasms often terminate with a special application to the writer. Thus he says: "Vanity is so rooted in the heart of man, that a common soldier, a scullion, will boast of himself, and will have his admirers. It is the same with the philosophers. Those who write would fain have the fame of having written well; and those who read it, would have the glory of having read it; *and I, who am writing, probably feel the same desire, and not less those who shall read it.*"

It is true, indeed, that some of his reflections are as caustic and bitter as those of Rochefoucauld himself. For example: "Curiosity is but vanity. Often we wish to know more, only that we may talk of it. People would never traverse the sea, if they were never to speak of it; for the mere pleasure of seeing, without the hope of ever telling what they have seen."

And again: "Man is so constituted, that, by merely telling him he is a fool, he will at length believe it; and, if he tells himself so, he will constrain himself to believe it. For man holds an internal intercourse with himself, which ought to be well regulated, since even here 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.'"

It may not be without amusement, perhaps instruction, to cite one or two other specimens of this shrewd and caustic humor.

"Certain authors, speaking of their works, say, 'My book, my commentary, my history.' It were better to say, 'Our book, our history, our commentary'; for generally there is more in it belonging to others than to themselves."

"I lay it down as a fact, that, if all men knew what they say of one another, there would not be four friends in the world. This appears by the quarrels which are sometimes caused by indiscreet reports."

Still, as it is the motive which gives complexion to all our moral actions, so Pascal's bitter wisdom, or even his unjust satire, is something very different from misanthropy. Byron found an apology for his Cain in Milton's delineation of Satan; but few besides himself could ever see its force. With as little reason could a Timon plead the example of a Pascal. Those who cannot see a deep benevolence in all that he wrote respecting our corrupted nature, must indeed be blind. It is with no demoniacal chuckle, no smile of malicious triumph, that he publishes the result of his researches into the depths of man's moral nature. On the contrary, it is with profoundest pity. He gazes on the noble ruins of humanity as on those of some magnificent temple, and longs to see the fallen columns and the defaced sculpture restored. With what noble eloquence — with what deep sympathy with humanity — does he rebuke the levity of those infidels who tell us, as if it were a matter of triumph, that we are "the inhabitants of a fatherless and forsaken world"; and who talk as if their vaunted demonstration of the vanity of our immortal hopes gave them a peculiar title to our gratitude and admiration! "What advantage is it to us to hear a man saying that he has thrown off the yoke; that he does not think there is any God who watches over his actions; that he considers himself as the sole judge of his conduct, and that he is accountable to none but himself? Does he imagine that we shall hereafter repose special confidence in him, and expect from him consolation, advice, succor, in the exigencies of life? Do such men imagine that it is any matter of delight to us to hear that they hold that our soul is but a little vapor or smoke, and that they can tell us this in an assured and self-sufficient tone of voice? Is this, then, a thing to say with gayety? Is it not rather a thing to be said with tears, as the saddest thing in the world?"

On the whole, in contemplating the richly diversified characteristics of this exalted genius in its different moods and phases, — the combination of sublimity and depth with lightness and grace, of the noblest aptitudes for abstract speculation with the utmost delicacy of taste and sensibility of feeling, of profound melancholy with the happiest and most refined humor and raillery, — the grandeur of many aspects of his character, and the loveliness of others, — we seem to be reminded of the contradictory features of Alpine scenery, where all forms of sublimity and beauty, of loveliness and terror, are found in singular proximity; where upland valleys of exquisite verdure and softness lie at the foot of the eternal glaciers; where spots of purest pastoral repose and beauty smile under the very shadow of huge, snowy peaks, and form the entrance of those savage gorges, in which reigns perpetual, but sublime desolation; where the very silence is appalling, — broken only by the roar of the distant cataract, and the lonely thunder of the avalanche.

We must now make some remarks on the projected treatise, of which the "Pensées" were designed to form the rude materials.

It is impossible to determine, from the undeveloped character of these "Thoughts," the precise form of the work; all we are told is, that it was to have treated of the primary truths of all religion, and of the evidences of Christianity. It is clear, that about half the "thoughts" which relate to theology at all, have reference to the former. In Pascal's time, however, both subjects might have been naturally included in one work. The great deistical controversies of Europe had not yet commenced, and there had been little reason to discriminate very nicely the limits of the two investigations. Pascal himself could hardly have anticipated the diversified forms which the subject of the evidences of Christianity alone would assume, — so diversified, indeed, that they are probably insusceptible from their variety (external and internal) of being fully exhibited by one mind, or, consequently, in one volume. The evidences of Christianity almost form a science of themselves.

Fragmentary as the "Pensées" are, it is easy to see, both from their general tenor, and from the character of the author's mind, where the principal strength of such a work would lie. His proofs of the truths of natural religion would have been drawn from within, rather than from without; and his proofs of the truths of Christianity from its internal rather than external evidences; — including in this term "internal," not only the adaptation of the doctrines revealed to the moral nature of man, but whatsoever indications the fabric of Scripture itself may afford of the divinity of its origin.

It is evident, that he had revolved all these topics profoundly. None had explored more diligently the abyss of man's moral nature, or mused more deeply on the "greatness and misery of man," — or on the "contrarieties" which characterize him, — or on the remedies for his infirmities and corruptions. And there are few, even since his time, who seem to have appreciated more fully the evidences of Christianity arising from indications of truth in the genius, structure, and style of the Scriptures; or from the difficulties, not to say impossibilities, of supposing *such* a fiction as Christianity the probable product of any human artifice, much less of such an age, country, and, above all, such men, as the problem limits us to. In one passage, he gives expression to a thought which has been expanded into the beautiful and eminently original work of Paley, entitled "Horæ Paulinæ." He says: "The style of the Gospel is admirable in many respects, and, amongst others, in this, — that there is not a single invective against the murderers and enemies of Jesus Christ. . . . . . If the modesty of the evangelical historians had been affected, and, in common with so many other traits of so beautiful a character, had been affected only that they might be observed, then, if they had not ventured to advert to it themselves, they would not have failed to get their friends to remark on it, to their advantage. But as they acted in this way without affectation, and from a principle altogether disinterested, they never provided any one to make such a criticism. *And, in my judgment, there are many points of this kind which have never been noticed hitherto ;* and this testifies to the simplicity with which the thing was done."*

He has also, with characteristic comprehensiveness, condensed into a single paragraph the substance of the celebrated volume of "Bampton Lectures," on the contrasts between Mahometanism and Christianity. "Mahomet founded his system on slaughter ; Jesus Christ by exposing his disciples to death ; Mahomet by forbidding to read ; the Apostles by commanding it. In a word, so opposite is the plan of one from that of the other, that, if Mahomet took the way to succeed according to human calculation, Jesus Christ certainly took the way to fail ; and instead of arguing, that, since Mahomet succeeded, Jesus Christ might also succeed, we ought rather to say, that, since Mahomet succeeded, it is impossible but that Jesus Christ should fail."†

On the subject of the External Evidences, we doubt whether he would have been equally successful, — partly because the spirit of accurate historic investigation had not yet been developed, and partly from the character of his own mind. On the subject of Miracles, too, he scarcely seems to have worked his conceptions clear ; and in relation to that of Prophecy, he was evidently often inclined to lay undue stress on analogies between events recorded in the Old Testament and others recorded in the New, where Scripture itself is silent as to any connection between them ; — analogies in one or two cases as fanciful as any of those in which the Fathers saw so many types and prefigurations of undeveloped truths. This disposition to forget the limits between the analogies which may form the foundation of a logical argument, and those which, after all, can yield only poetical illustrations, has too often obtruded itself even into the domain of physical science; and is one from which the most philosophic minds, if they have much imaginativeness, are by no means exempt. Even Bacon, in several instances, has been the dupe of this delusion, — one of the *idola tribus* which he was so anxious to expose.

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* Tom. II. p. 370.

† Ibid., p. 337.

There is one subject on which, after reading the "Pensées," one would fain have seen a treatise from the hand of Pascal. If he had enjoyed leisure, health, and an unclouded mind, there is probably no man who could have written more profoundly or more wisely on the *Prima Philosophia*, — the first principles of all knowledge, — the limits within which man can hopefully speculate, — and the condition and principles of belief. On all these subjects he had reflected much and deeply. His remarks on the position of man between "the two infinitudes," which he has so finely illustrated, — on the Dogmatists and Pyrrhonists, — on the influence of the affections and passions on the understanding, — and his observations entitled, "De l'Art de Persuader," and "De l'Esprit Géométrique," — all show how deeply he had revolved the principal topics of such a work.

We have already alluded to the charge preferred against Pascal by M. Cousin, of no less than universal and hopeless scepticism; — from which, as is said, he took refuge in faith by a blind effort of will, without evidence, and in utter despair of obtaining it. One or two brief citations will show the extent to which this charge is pushed. "Ce dessein [des 'Pensées,'] je l'ai démontré dans ce Rapport, était *d'accabler la philosophie Cartésienne, et avec elle toute philosophie, sous le scepticisme*, pour ne laisser à la foi naturelle de l'homme d'autre asîle que la religion. Or en cela, l'adversaire des Jesuites en devient, sans s'en douter, le serviteur et le soldat." * — "Lui aussi, il a pour principe que *le*

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* Rapport, pp. xiii., xviii.

Pyrrhonisme est le vrai." — "Il est sceptique, et, comme Huet, il se propose de conduire l'homme à la foi par la route du scepticisme."* M. Cousin even goes the length of saying that Pascal's religion "was not the solid and pleasant fruit which springs from the union of reason and feeling — *de la raison et du cœur* — in a soul well constituted and wisely cultivated; it is a bitter fruit, reared in a region desolated by doubt, under the arid breath of despair."† He also tells us, that "the very depth of Pascal's soul was a universal scepticism, from which he could find no refuge except in a voluntarily blind credulity." "*Le fond même de l'âme de Pascal est un scepticisme universel, contre lequel il ne trouve d'asîle que dans une foi volontairement aveugle.*"

These are certainly charges which, without the gravest and most decisive proof, ought not to be preferred against any man; much less against one possessing so clear and powerful an intellect as Pascal. It is, in fact, the most degrading picture which can be presented of any mind; for what weakness can be more pitiable, or what inconsistency more gross, than that of a man who, by a mere act of will, — if, indeed, such a condition of mind be conceivable, — surrenders himself to the belief of the most stupendous doctrines, while he at the same time acknowledges that he has no proof whatever of their certainty?

We have great respect for M. Cousin as a philosopher and historian of philosophy, and we willingly render him the homage of our thanks for his liberal and enlightened survey of the intellectual philosophy of Scotland; but he must excuse us for dissenting from, and freely examining, his startling view of the scepticism of Pascal. That charge we do not hesitate to pronounce unjust, for the following reasons: —

1. It appears to us that M. Cousin has forgotten that Pascal by no means denies that there is sufficient evidence of

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* Rapport, p. xix.

† Ibid., p. 162.

the many great principles to which scepticism objects; he only maintains that we do not arrive at them by *demonstration.* He has powerfully vindicated the certainty of those intuitive principles which are not ascertained by reasoning, but are presupposed in every exercise of reasoning. Let us hear him. "The only strong point," says he, "of the Dogmatists is, that we cannot consistently with honesty and sincerity doubt our own intuitive principles. . . . . . We know the truth, not only by reasoning, but by feeling, and by a vivid and luminous power of direct comprehension; and it is by this last faculty that we discern first principles. It is vain for reasoning, which has no share in discovering these principles, to attempt subverting them. . . . . . The Pyrrhonists who attempt this must try in vain. . . . . . The knowledge of first principles, as the ideas of space, time, motion, number, matter, is as unequivocally certain as any that reasoning imparts. And, after all, it is on the perceptions of feeling and common sense that reason must at last sustain itself, and base its argument. . . . . . Principles are perceived, propositions are deduced: each part of the process is certain, though in different modes. And it is as ridiculous that reason should require of feeling and perception proofs of these first principles before she assents to them, as it would be that perception should require from reason an intuitive impression of all the propositions at which *she* arrives. This weakness, therefore, ought only to humble that reason which would constitute herself the judge all things, but not to invalidate the convictions of common sense, as if reason * only could be our guide and teacher." Can he who thus speaks be a "universal sceptic," when it is the peculiar characteristic of Pyrrhonism — that is, universal scepticism — to controvert the certainty of principles perceived by intuition, and to plume itself upon having successfully done this, when it has shown that they cannot be demonstrated by reasoning?

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* It is true that, in these and many similar passages, Pascal, as M. Cousin rightly observes, often employs the word *reason* as if it were synonymous with *reasoning.* But this only respects the *propriety* of his expressions; his *meaning* is surely tolerably clear.

But let us hear him still more expressly on the subject of Pyrrhonism. "Here, then, is open war proclaimed amongst men. Each must take a side; must necessarily range himself with the Pyrrhonists or the Dogmatists; for he who would think to remain neuter is a Pyrrhonist *par excellence.* He who is not against them is for them. What, then, must a person do in this alternative? Shall he doubt of every thing? Shall he doubt that he is awake, or that he is pinched or burned? Shall he doubt that he doubts? Shall he doubt that he is? We cannot get so far as this; and I hold it to be a fact, that there never has been an absolute and perfect Pyrrhonist." M. Cousin must suppose Pascal to have made an exception in favor of himself, if it indeed be true that he was a "universal sceptic."

2. It does not appear to us that M. Cousin has sufficiently reflected, that, in those cases in which conclusions truly involve processes of reasoning, Pascal would not deny that the preponderance of truth rested with the truths he believed, though he denied the *demonstrative* nature of that proof. And he applies this with perfect fairness to the evidences of Christianity, as well as to the truths of natural theology. It may well be, that minds so differently constituted as those of Pascal and Cousin may form different conclusions as to the *degree* of success which may attend the efforts of human reasoning; but a man is not to be straightway branded with the name of a universal sceptic, because he believes that there are very few subjects on which evidence can be said to be demonstrative. The more deeply a man reflects, the fewer will he think the subjects on which this species of certainty can be obtained; and the study neither of ancient nor of modern philosophy will convince him that he is far wrong in this conclusion. But he will not, for all that, deny that there is sufficient evidence on all the more important subjects to form the belief and determine the conduct of man, — evi-

dence of precisely the same nature with that which *does* form the one, and *does* determine the other, in all the ordinary affairs of life. And this alone, where a man rejects such evidence, is sufficient to condemn him ; for what right has he to decline, in the more important instances, a species and degree of evidence which he never hesitates to *act* upon in all other cases ?

Now, that Pascal believed that there was sufficient evidence of this character, for all the fundamental truths of religion, is manifest from many express declarations. "There is light enough," says he, "for those whose sincere wish is to see ; and darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition." * Of Christianity he says: "It is impossible to see all the proofs of this religion combined in one view, without feeling that they have a force which no reasonable man can withstand." † "The proofs of our religion are not of that kind that we can say they are *geometrically convincing.* . . . . . But their light is such that it outshines, or at the least equals, the strongest presumption to the contrary: so much so, that *sound reason* never can determine not to accept the evidence, and probably it is only the corruption and depravity of the heart that do." It is not without reason that M. Faugère says, in reference to the charge of scepticism urged against Pascal : "Faith and reason may equally claim him. If they sometimes appear to clash in his mind, it is because he wanted time, not only to finish the work on which he was engaged, but even to complete that internal revision, — *son œuvre intérieure*, — which is a kind of second creation of genius ; and to melt into one harmonious whole the diverse elements of his thoughts. . . . . . Amongst the inedited fragments of Pascal we find these remarkable lines : 'Il faut avoir ces trois qualitiés ; Pyrrhonien, géomètre, Chrétien soumis ; *et elles s'accordent et se tempèrent en doutant où il faut, en assurant où il faut, en se soummettant où il faut.*'

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[*] Tom. II. p. 151.

[†] Ibid., p. 365.

These bold words comprise the entire history of Pascal, and express in brief the state of his mind." *

3. While we admit that the severely geometrical cast of Pascal's mind, as well as his gloomy temperament, have led him at times into extravagant expressions on this subject, so accomplished a critic as M. Cousin needs not be told that it is not fair to take such expressions alone, and in their utmost strictness, if they can be confronted with others which modify or explain them. The former, in common candor, are to be interpreted only in connection with the latter. This is the course we always pursue in interpreting the language of writers who have indulged in unlimited propositions; and if it be found even impossible to harmonize certain expressions, — if they be absolutely contradictory, — all we feel at liberty to do is to affirm the inconsistency of the writer; not to assume that he meant *all* that could possibly be implied in the one class of expressions, and *nothing* by the other. We know it is so natural for an author of much imagination or sensibility to give an inordinately strong expression to a present thought or feeling, and to forget the judge in the advocate, that he must be taken in another mood, or rather in several, if we wish to ascertain the *true mean* of his sentiments. Pascal has in one of his "Pensées" indicated this only reasonable method of procedure.

Now M. Cousin is surely aware of the fact, that the expressions to which he has given such an unfavorable interpretation, may be easily confronted with others of a different tendency. He himself, indeed, proclaims it. He even says, no man ever contradicted himself more than Pascal. "*Jamais homme ne s'est plus contredit.*" "Confounding," says he, "reasoning and reason, forgetting that he has himself judiciously discriminated primary and indemonstrable truths — discovered to us by that spontaneous intuition of reason which we also with him call instinct, sentiment, feeling — from truths which are deduced from them by the method of reasoning, or which we draw from experience by induction ; — forgetting that he has thus himself replied beforehand to all the attacks of scepticism, Pascal demands all these principles from experience and reasoning, and by that means, without much trouble, confounds them all." * Now we do not stay to inquire here into the justness of the latter part of this representation ; but we simply ask, Why should all the "replies" which, as our author admits, "Pascal has *himself* made to scepticism," go for nothing, and only the sentences in which he appears to favor it be remembered ; and not only remembered, but taken as the sole exponents of his opinions ? Surely a sceptic might as well take the opposite side, and say, "Alas ! after Pascal seems in many expressions to have conceded much to scepticism, he forgets all he had said ; and shows, by his whole talk of 'intuitive truths,' and 'sentiment,' and 'feeling,' that he is no better than a dogmatist." Might we not say to the two objectors, "Worthy friends ! you are the two knights in the fable ; — one is looking on the golden, and the other on the silver side of the same shield."

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* Tom. I. p. lxxvii. Introduction.

4. Nor is it to be forgotten, that, while such a mode of interpretation as that of M. Cousin would hardly be just in the case of any work of any author, it is especially unfair to apply it to such a work, or rather mere materials of a work, as the "Pensées." They were, we are to recollect, mere notes for Pascal's own use, and were never intended to be published as they are. Many of them are altogether imperfect and undeveloped ; some scarcely intelligible. It is impossible to tell with what modifications, and in what connection, they would have stood in the matured form which the master mind, here hastily recording them for private reference, would have ultimately given them. Nay, there can scarcely be a doubt, that many of them were mere objections which

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* Rapport, p. 157.

Pascal noted for refutation, — not opinions to be maintained by him; and this in many places may be not obscurely inferred: some, again, are mere quotations from Montaigne and other authors, extracted for some unknown purpose, but not distinguished in these private memoranda from the writer's own expressions; so that the first editors of the "Pensées" actually printed them in some cases as his. And lastly, some were dictated, in moments of sickness and pain, to an old domestic, who has scrawled them in a fashion which sufficiently shows that it is very possible that some errors may lie with the amanuensis.* Yet M. Cousin, while straining every expression on which he founds his charge of scepticism to its utmost strictness of literal meaning, never seems to have adverted to one of these very reasonable considerations.

5. The weight which any deliberate opinion of M. Cousin must reasonably possess, may in this case well be confronted with that of Bayle; whose notorious scepticism would have been but too glad to find an ally in so admired a genius as Pascal, had there been any plausible pretext on which to claim him. Yet that subtle and acute critic declares, that Pascal knew perfectly well what to render to faith, and what to reason.

6. In our judgment, Pascal's projected work is itself a sufficient confutation of M. Cousin's supposition. For, did ever man before meditate an elaborate work on the "evidences" of truths for which he believed no evidence but a blind faith could be given?

7. We maintain, lastly, that even if it be proved (which is, doubtless, very true) that Pascal, at different periods and in different moods of mind, formed varying estimates of the evidence on behalf of the great truths in which he was so

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* Of one of these expressions, on which M. Cousin has founded much, M. Faugère says: "Tout ce morceau, dicté à une personne visiblement fort peu lettrée, présente çà et là des obscurités qui viennent sans doute de l'inexpérience du secrétaire." — Tom. II. p. 114.

sincere a believer, or even (which may possibly be true) that for transient intervals he doubted the conclusiveness of that evidence altogether; these variations would be far from justifying a charge of "universal and habitual scepticism"; — such momentary differences of thought and mood having been notoriously experienced by almost all great minds. With some remarks on this subject, which may possibly be serviceable to minds peculiarly liable to attacks of scepticism, and calculated to teach all of us charity in judging of others, we shall close the present essay.

First, then, it by no means appears that a momentary invasion of doubt, or even of scepticism, is inconsistent with a *prevailing* and *habitual* faith, founded on an intelligent conviction of a preponderance of reasons to justify it; though those reasons may be felt to fall far short of absolute demonstration. There may be a profound impression that the reasons which sustain habitual belief in any truth established only on moral evidence, or on a calculation of probabilities, are so varied and powerful — so vast in their sum — as to leave, in ordinary moods of mind, no doubt as to the conclusions to which they point, and the practical course of conduct which alone they can justify. And yet it is quite true, that from the infirmities of our nature, — from the momentary strength which the most casual circumstances may give to opposing objections, — from the depressing influence of sorrow, of a trivial indisposition, of a transient fit of melancholy, of impaired digestion, even of a variation of the weather (for on all these humiliating conditions does the boasted soundness of human reason depend), — a man shall for an hour or a day really doubt of that of which he never doubted yesterday, and of which he would be ashamed to doubt to-morrow. And especially is this the case in those who, like Pascal, possess exquisite sensibility, or are liable to fits of profound depression. As they look upon truth through the medium of cheerful or gloomy feelings, truth herself varies like a landscape, as seen in a bright sunshine or on a cloudy day. Pascal himself, in those reveries in which he loved to indulge on the mingled "greatness and misery of man," has frequently depicted the dependence of the most powerful mind, even in the bare exercise of its exalted faculties, on the most insignificant circumstances. We have cited, in the early part of this article, one striking passage to this effect. In another place he says: "Place the greatest philosopher in the world on a plank, wider than is absolutely necessary for safety, and yet, if there is a precipice below him, though reason may convince him of his security, his imagination will prevail. There are many who could not even bear the thought of it without paleness and agitation." * Another very powerful representation, to the same effect, may be found on the same page, where, after describing a "venerable judge," who may seem "under the control of a pure and dignified wisdom," and enumerating several petty trials "of his exemplary gravity," Pascal declares, that, let any one of these befall him, "and he will engage for the loss of the judge's self-possession."

Nor are the causes which disturb the exercise of the reason merely physical: moral causes are yet more powerful; as we wish, hope, fear, humiliating as the fact is, so do we proceed to judge of evidence. Reason, that vaunted guide of life, nowhere exists as a pure and colorless light, but is perpetually tinctured by the medium through which it passes; it flows in upon us through painted windows. And thus it is, that perhaps scarcely once in ten thousand times, probably never, does man deliver a judgment on evidence simply and absolutely judicial. "The heart," says Pascal, with great truth, "has its reasons, which reason cannot apprehend." "The will," says he, in another place, "is one of the principal instruments of belief; not that it creates belief, but because things are true or false according to the aspect in which we regard them. The will, which is more inclined to one thing than

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* Tom. II. p. 49.

another, turns away the mind from the consideration of those things which it loves not to contemplate; and thus the mind, moving with the will, stops to observe that which it approves, and forms its judgment by what it sees."

Most emphatically is this the case, where the moral state is habitually opposed to the conclusions to which the preponderance of evidence points. This is so notorious, in relation to the fundamental truths of morals and religion, that there are probably few who really disbelieve them, or profess to do so, who (if they examine themselves at all) are not conscious that the "wish is father to the thought." And what is true of habitual states of moral feeling is also, in proportion, true of more transient states.

Certain, however, it is, that from one or other of the above causes, or from a combination of several, neither has the understanding the absolute dominion in the formation of our judgments, nor does she occupy an "unshaken throne." A seditious rabble of doubts, from time to time, rise to dispute her empire. Even where the mind, in its habitual states, is unconscious of any remaining doubt, — where it reposes in a vast preponderance of evidence in favor of this or that conclusión, — there may yet be, from one or other of the disturbing causes adverted to, a momentary eclipse of that light in which the soul seemed to dwell; a momentary vibration of that judgment which we so often flattered ourselves was poised for ever. Yet this no more argues the want of habitual faith, than the variations of the compass argue the severance of the connection between the magnet and the pole; or than the oscillations of the "rocking stone" argue that the solid mass can be heaved from its bed. A child may shake it, but a giant cannot overturn it.

And, as *a matter of fact*, there are, we apprehend, very few who have not been conscious of sudden and almost unaccountable disturbances of the intellectual atmosphere, unaccountable even after the equilibrium has been restored, and the air has again become serene and tranquil. In these momentary fluctuations, whether arising from moral or physical causes, or from causes of both kinds, — from nervous depression, or a fit of melancholy, or an attack of pain, or harassing anxieties, or the loss of friends, or their misfortunes and calamities, or signal triumphs of baseness, or signal discomfitures of virtue, or, above all, from conscious neglect of duty, — a man shall sometimes feel as if he had lost sight even of those primal truths on which he has been accustomed to gaze as on the stars of the firmament, — bright, serene, and unchangeable; even such truths as the existence of God, his paternal government of the world, and the divine origin of Christianity. In these moods, objections, which he thought had long since been dead and buried, start again into sudden existence. They do more; like the escaped genius of the "Arabian Nights," who rises from the little bottle in which he had been imprisoned, in the shape of a thin smoke, which finally assumes gigantic outlines and towers to the skies, these flimsy objections dilate into monstrous dimensions, and fill the whole sphere of mental vision. The arguments by which we have been accustomed to combat them seem to have vanished, or, if they appear at all, look diminished in force and vividness. If we may pursue the allusion we have just made, we even wonder how such mighty forms should ever have been compressed into so narrow a space. Bunyan tells us, that when his pilgrims, under the perturbation produced by previous terrible visions, turned the perspective glass towards the Celestial City from the summits of the Delectable Mountains, "their hands shook so that they could not steadily look through the" instrument; "yet they *thought* they saw something like the gate, and also some of the glory of the place." It is even so with many of the moods in which other "pilgrims" attempt to gaze in the same direction; a deep haze seems to have settled over the golden pinnacles and the "gates of pearl"; they, for a moment, doubt whether what others declare they have seen, and what they flatter themselves they have themselves seen, be any thing else than a gorgeous vision in the clouds; and "faith" is no longer "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

And as there are probably few who have profoundly investigated the evidences of truth, who have not felt themselves for a moment at least, and sometimes for a yet longer space, as if on the verge of universal scepticism, and about to be driven forth, without star or compass, on a boundless ocean of doubt and perplexity, so these states of feeling are peculiarly apt to infest the highest order of minds. For if, on the one hand, these can best discern and estimate the evidence which proves any truth, they, on the other, can see most clearly, and feel most strongly, the nature and extent of the objections which oppose it; while they are, at the same time, just as liable as the vulgar to the disturbing influences already adverted to. This liability is of course doubled, when its subject, as in the case of Pascal, labors under the disadvantage of a gloomy temperament.

A circumstance which in these conflicts of mind often gives *sceptical* objections an undue advantage is, that the great truths which it is more especially apt to assail are generally the result of an accumulation of proof by induction, or are even dependent on quite separate trains of argument. The mind, therefore, cannot comprehend them at a glance, and feel at once their integrated force, but must examine them in detail by successive acts of mind, — just as we take the measurement of magnitudes too vast to be seen at once in successive small portions. The existence of God, the moral government of the world, the divine origin of Christianity, are all truths of this stamp. Pascal, in one of his "Pensées," refers to this infirmity of the logical faculties. He justly observes: "To have a series of proofs incessantly before the mind, is beyond our power." *D'en avoir toujours les preuves présentes, c'est trop d'affaire.*

From the inability of the mind to retain in perpetuity, or to comprehend at a glance, a long chain of evidence, or the total effect of various lines of argument, Pascal truly observes, that it is not sufficient for the security of our convictions, and their due influence over our belief and practice, that we have proved them once for all by a process of reasoning; — they must be, if possible, tinctured and colored by the imagination, informed and animated by feeling, and rendered vigorous and practical by habit. His words are well worth citing: "Reason acts slowly, and with so many principles which it is necessary should be always present, that it is perpetually dropping asleep, and is lost for want of having all its principles present to it. The affections do not act thus; they act instantaneously and are always ready for action. It is necessary, therefore, to imbue our faith with feeling, otherwise it will be always vacillating." *

It will not, of course, be imagined that, in the observations just now made, we are disposed to be the *apologists* of scepticism; or even, so far as it is yielded to, of that transient doubt to which the most powerful minds are not only liable, but liable in defiance of what are ordinarily their strong convictions. So far as such states of mind are involuntary, and for an instant they often are, (till, in fact, the mind collects itself, and repels them,) they are of course the object, not of blame, but of pity. So far as they are dependent upon fluctuations of feeling, or upon physical causes which we can at all modify or control, it is our duty to summon the mind to resist the assault, and to reflect on the nature of that evidence which has so often appeared to us little less than demonstrative.

We are not, then, the apologists of scepticism, or any thing approaching it; we are merely stating a psychological fact, for the proof of which the appeal lies to the recorded confessions of many great minds, and to the experience of those who have reflected deeply enough on any large and difficult subject, to know what can be said for or against it.

The asserted fact is, that *habitual* belief of the sincerest and strongest character is sometimes checkered with transient fits of doubt and misgiving; and that even where there is no actual *disbelief*, — no, not for a moment, — the mind may, in some of its moods, form a very diminished estimate of the evidence on which belief is founded, and grievously understate it accordingly. We believe that both these states of mind were occasionally experienced by Pascal, — the latter, however, more frequently than the former; and hence originated, as we apprehend, those passages in which he speaks of the evidence for the existence of a God, or for the truth of Christianity, as less conclusive than he ordinarily believed, or than he has at other times declared it. At such times the clouds may be supposed to have hung low upon this lofty mind.

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* Vol. II. pp. 175, 176.

So little inconsistent with a *habit* of intelligent faith are such transient invasions of doubt, or such diminished perceptions of the evidence of truth, that it may even be said that it is only those who have in some measure experienced them, who can be said, in the highest sense, to believe at all. He who has never had a doubt, who believes what he believes for reasons which he thinks as irrefragable (if that be possible) as those of a mathematical demonstration, ought not to be said so much to *believe* as to *know*; his belief is to him knowledge, and his mind stands in the same relation to it, however erroneous and absurd that belief may be. It is rather he whose faith is exercised — not indeed without his reason, but without the full satisfaction of his reason — with a knowledge and appreciation of formidable objections, — it is this man who may most truly be said intelligently to believe.

While it is true that we are called upon to receive the great truths of Theology, whether natural or revealed, on evidence which is less than demonstrative, we are not to forget that no subjects out of the sciences of magnitude and number admit of any such demonstration. We are required to do no more in religion, than we are in fact necessitated to do in all the affairs of common life; that is, to form our conclusions upon a sincere and diligent investigation of moral evidence. And, after all, such an arrangement is not only in harmonious analogy with all the conditions of our ordinary life, but, if the present world be indeed a state of moral probation, — if it be designed to test our diligence and sincerity, to teach us what is so suitable in a finite and created being, a submissive and confiding posture of mind towards the Infinite Creator, — such an arrangement is essential to our course of moral discipline and education. If we are required to believe nothing but what it is impossible that we should doubt, — that is, nothing but what it would be a contradiction to deny, — where would be the proof of our willingness to believe on the bare assurance of wisdom and knowledge superior to our own? Wise men assuredly consider it as a most important element in the education of their own children, not, indeed, that they should be taught to believe what they are told without any reason, (and if they have been properly trained, a just confidence in the assurances of their superiors in knowledge will on many subjects be reason sufficient,) yet upon evidence far less than demonstration; indeed, upon evidence far less than they will be able to appreciate, when the lapse of a few brief years has transformed them from children into men. We certainly expect them to believe many things as *facts* which as yet they cannot fully comprehend, — nay, which they tell us are, in appearance, paradoxical; and to rest satisfied with the assurance, that it is in vain for us to attempt to explain the evidence till they get older and wiser. We are accustomed even to augur the worst results as to the future course and conduct of a youth who has not learned to exercise thus much of practical faith, and who flippantly rejects, on the score of *his* not being able to comprehend them, truths of which he yet has greater evidence, though not *direct* evidence, of their being truths, than he has of the contrary. Now, "if we have had earthly fathers, and have given them reverence" after this fashion, and when we have become men have applauded our submission as appropriate to our condition of dependence, "shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?"

If, then, the present be a scene of moral education and discipline, it seems fit in itself that the evidence of the truths we believe should be checkered with difficulties and liable to objections; — not strong enough to force assent, nor so obscure as to elude sincere investigation. God, according to the memorable aphorism of Pascal already cited, has afforded sufficient light to those whose object is to see, and left sufficient obscurity to perplex those who have no such wish. All that seems necessary or reasonable to expect is, that, as we are certainly not called upon to believe any thing *without* reason, nor without a *preponderance* of reason, so the evidence shall be such as our faculties are capable of dealing with; and that the objections shall be only such as equally baffle us upon any other hypothesis, or are insoluble because they transcend altogether the limits of the human understanding; which last circumstance can be no valid reason, apart from other grounds, either for accepting or rejecting a given dogma. Now, we contend, that it is in this equitable way that God has dealt with us as moral agents, in relation to all the great truths which lie at the basis of religion and morals; and, we may add, in relation to the divine origin of Christianity. The evidence is all of such a *nature* as we are accustomed every day to deal with and to act upon; while the objections are either such as reappear in every other theory, or turn on difficulties absolutely beyond the limits of the human faculties. Take, for example, the principal argument which proves the existence of God; the argument which infers from the traces of intelligent design in the universe, the existence of a wise and powerful author. In applying this principle, man only acts as he acts every day of his life in other cases. He acts on a principle which, if he were to doubt, or even affect to doubt, he would be laughed at by his fellow-men as a ridiculous pedant, or a crazy metaphysician. Whether indications of design, countless as they are inimitable, with which the whole universe is inscribed, are likely to be the result of chance, is a question which turns on principles of evidence with which man is so familiar that he cannot adopt the affirmative without contradicting all his judgments in every other analogous, or similar, or conceivable case. On the other hand, the objections to the conclusion that there is some Eternal Being of illimitable power and wisdom, are precisely of the nature we have mentioned. A man makes a difficulty, we will suppose, (as well he may,) of conceiving that which has existed from eternity; but, as something certainly exists now, the denial of the existence of such a Being does not relieve from that difficulty, unless the objector plunges into another equally great, — that of supposing it possible for the universe to have sprung into existence without a cause at all. This difficulty, then, is one which reappears under any hypothesis. Again, we will suppose him to make a difficulty of the ideas of self-subsistence, — of omnipresence without extension of parts, — of power which creates out of nothing, and which acts simply by volition, — of a knowledge cognizant of each thing and of all its relations (actual and possible, past, present, and to come) to every other thing, at every point of illimitable space, and in every moment of endless duration. But then these are difficulties, the solution of which clearly transcends the limits of the human understanding; and to deny the doctrines which seem established by evidence which we *can* appreciate, because we cannot solve difficulties which lie altogether beyond our capacities, seems like resolving that nothing shall be true but what we can fully comprehend, — a principle, again, which, in numberless other cases, we neither can nor pretend to act upon.

It is much the same with the evidences of Christianity. Whether a certain amount and complexity of testimony are likely to be false; whether it is likely that not one but a number of men would endure ignominy, persecution, and the last extremities of torture, in support of an unprofitable lie; whether such an original fiction as Christianity — if it be fiction — is likely to have been the production of Galilean peasants; whether any thing so sublime was to be expected from fools, or any thing so holy from knaves; whether illiterate fraud was likely to be equal to such a wonderful fabrication; whether infinite artifice may be expected from ignorance, or a perfectly natural and successful assumption of truth from imposture; — these and a multitude of the like questions are precisely of the same *nature*, however they may be decided, with those with which the historian and the advocate, judges, and courts of law are every day required to deal. On the other hand, whether miracles have ever been, or are ever likely to be, admitted in the administration of the universe, is a question on which it would demand a far more comprehensive knowledge of that administration than we can possibly possess, to justify an *a priori* decision. That they are possible is all that is required; and that no consistent theist can deny. Other difficulties of Christianity, as Bishop Butler has so clearly shown, baffle us on every other hypothesis; they meet us as much in the "constitution of nature" as in the pages of revelation, and cannot consistently be pleaded against Christianity without being equally fatal to Theism.

There are two things, we will venture to say, at which the philosophers of some future age will stand equally astonished; the one is, that any man should have been called upon to believe *any* mystery, whether of philosophy or religion, without a preponderance of evidence of a nature which he can grasp, or on the mere *ipse dixit* of a fallible creature like himself; the other, that, where there *is* such evidence, man should reject a mystery, merely because it is one. This last, perhaps, will be regarded as the more astonishing of the two. That man, who lives in a dwelling of clay, and looks out upon the illimitable universe through such tiny windows, — who stands, as Pascal sublimely says, between "two infinitudes," — who is absolutely surrounded by mysteries, which he overlooks only because he is so familiar with them, — should doubt a proposition (otherwise well sustained) from its intrinsic difficulty, does not seem very reasonable. But when we further reflect, that that very mind, which thus erects itself into a standard of all things, is most ignorant even of that which it ought to know best, — itself, — and finds there the most inscrutable of all mysteries; — that when asked to declare what itself is, it is obliged to confess that it knows nothing about the matter, — nothing either of its own essence or its mode of operation; that it is sometimes inclined to think itself material, and sometimes immaterial; that it cannot quite come to a conclusion whether the body really exists or is a phantom, or in what way (if the body really exist) the intimate union between the two is maintained; — that it is perplexed beyond expression even to conceive how these phenomena can be reconciled, — proclaiming it to be an almost equal contradiction to suppose that Matter can think, or the Soul be material, or a connection maintained between two totally different substances, and yet admitting that one of these must be true, though it cannot satisfactorily determine which; — when we reflect on all this, surely we cannot but feel that the spectacle of so ignorant a thing refusing to believe a proposition merely *because* it is above its comprehension, is of all paradoxes the most paradoxical, and of all absurdities the most ludicrous!

SACRED ELOQUENCE: THE BRITISH PULPIT.*

ABOUT fifteen years ago our readers were presented with a critique on "French Sermons," concluding with an intimation that at some future period the subject would be resumed, with a special reference to the British pulpit.† In that article surprise was expressed that there should be so small a proportion of sermons destined to live; — that out of the *million* and upwards, preached annually throughout the empire, there should be so very few that are remembered three whole days after they are delivered, — fewer still that are committed to the press, — scarcely one that is not in a few years absolutely forgotten. "If any one," it was added, "were, for the first time, informed what preaching was, — if, for example, one of the ancient critics had been told that the time would come when vast multitudes of persons should assemble regularly, to be addressed, in the midst of their devotions, upon the most sacred truths of a religion sublime beyond all the speculations of philosophers, yet in all its most important points simple, and of the easiest apprehension; that with those truths were to be mingled discussions of the whole circle of human duties, according to a system of morality singularly pure and attractive; that the more dignified and the more interesting parts of national affairs were not to be excluded from the discourse; that, in short, the most elevating, the most touching, and the most interesting of all topics were to be the subject-matter of the address, directed to persons sufficiently versed in them, and assembled only from the desire they felt to hear them handled, — surely the conclusion would at once have been drawn, that such occasions must train up a race of the most consummate orators, and that the effusions to which they gave birth must needs cast all other rhetorical compositions into the shade. . . . . . How, then, comes it to pass, that instances are so rare of eminent eloquence in the pulpit?"

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* "Edinburgh Review," October, 1840.

Sermons to a Country Congregation. By AUGUSTUS WILLIAM HARE, late Fellow of New College, and Rector of Alton Barnes. 2 vols. 8vo. London. 1839.

† No. LXXXIX., pp. 147, 148.

Though we are willing to believe that some improvement in this branch of eloquence is gradually taking place, we are still of opinion that the above question is as pertinent as ever. It seems proper, therefore, to investigate the causes of so singular a phenomenon, and to urge upon those who are intrusted with so powerful an instrument of instruction as the Pulpit, the duty of endeavoring to turn it to better account.

To this important subject we propose to devote the present essay, premising that it is not at all our intention to discuss any doctrinal questions, or to examine how much of truth or error there may be in any given system of religious belief: we consider only the general conditions on which all religious instruction (presupposing it to be sound) should be conveyed; and especially the *style* and the *manner* peculiarly appropriated to this department of public speaking.

Without departing from the above resolution, we may, however, be allowed to make one obvious remark, even in relation to what ought to be the *substance* of that eloquence of which we propose more particularly to consider only the form. It is this: that, whatever diversities of opinion and of doctrine it may present, it is, of course, implied that there are limits to these diversities. We cannot expect that any system will produce its proper effects, however eloquent and forcible the form in which it is professedly exhibited, unless its essential peculiarities be preserved. A Mollah must not preach the doctrines of a Brahmin, if he wishes to see what are the genuine results of Islamism ; nor a Pundit interpret his sacred books by the Koran of the Prophet. In the same manner, if the Christian preacher (as was too often the case in times that are past) be nothing more than what Bishop Horsley calls "an ape of Epictetus," — a bad personation of Seneca tricked out in a gown and cassock, — or a doctor of metaphysics, who, by some strange blunder, has mistaken the church for the lecture-room, — we cannot rationally expect that Christianity should produce its genuine results. What are the precise limits within which the essentials of Christian doctrine may be exhibited in their integrity, it is not for us to determine : to do so would be to venture within that province which we have formally renounced. But that the essence of the doctrines and precepts of this peculiar system may be fully exhibited, notwithstanding considerable diversity of opinions on subordinate points, no man of candor will deny. The names of eminent men of very different parties will instantly suggest themselves to the memory of the reader, to whom, we are convinced, not one individual of the Christian community would deny the title of "preachers of righteousness."

But supposing the requisite purity of doctrine secured, — of which we must leave men to form their own opinion, — the mode in which that doctrine is exhibited and enforced is only second in importance. And the proof is found in this : that, if we appeal to an individual of *any* denomination, he will tell you that he knows preachers whom he cannot but account equally worthy and excellent, and equally in possession of the truth, (that is, who think exactly with himself, for that is the infallible standard by which each man measures the aberrations of his neighbor,) who yet shall produce the most opposite effects on him. The one shall send him to sleep in spite of himself, and the other shall not permit him to sleep, even if he would. Yet the substance of their communications, he himself being the judge, is in each case precisely the same.

We have long been convinced that the inefficiency that so generally distinguishes pulpit discourses is in a great degree owing to the two following causes: first, that preachers do not sufficiently cultivate, as part of their professional education, a systematic acquaintance with the principles upon which all effective eloquence must be founded, — with the limitations under which their topics must be chosen, and the mode in which they must be exhibited, in order to secure popular impression; and, secondly, that they do not, after they have assumed their sacred functions, give sufficient time or labor to the preparation of their discourses.

Many and splendid exceptions to these statements no doubt there are. We only fear that some for whom the consolation of this saving clause was not intended, will, nevertheless, complacently take the benefit of it. We shall offer some observations on both the causes of failure above specified, at the close of the present article.

The appropriateness of any composition, whether written or spoken, is easily deduced from its object. If that object be to instruct, convince, or persuade, or all these at the same time, we naturally expect that it should be throughout of a direct and earnest character; — indicating a mind absorbed in the avowed object, and solicitous only about what may subserve it. We expect that this singleness of purpose should be seen in the topics discussed, in the arguments selected to enforce them, in the modes of illustration, and even in the peculiarities of style and expression. We expect that nothing shall be introduced merely for the purpose of inspiring an interest, either in the thoughts or in the language, apart from their pertinency to the object; or of exciting an emotion of delight for its own sake, as in poetry, — although it is quite true that the most vivid pleasure will necessarily result from perceiving an exact adaptation of the means to the end. We cannot readily pardon mere beauties or elegances, striking thoughts or graceful imagery, if they are marked by this irrelevancy; since they serve only to impede the vehement current of argument or feeling. In a word, we expect nothing but what, under the circumstances of the speaker, is prompted by *nature;* — nature, not as opposed to a deliberate effort to adapt the means to the ends, and to do what is to be done as well as possible, for this, though in one sense art, is also the truest nature; — but nature, as opposed to whatever is inconsistent with the idea, that the man is under the dominion of genuine feeling, and bent upon taking the directest path to the accomplishment of his object. True eloquence is not like some painted window, which both transmits the light of day variegated and tinged with a thousand hues, and diverts the attention from its proper use to the pomp and splendor of the artist's doing. It is a perfectly trasparent medium; transmitting light, without suggesting a thought about the medium itself. Adaptation to the one single object is every thing.

These maxims have been universally recognized in deliberative and forensic eloquence. Those who have most severely exemplified them have ever been regarded as the truest models; while those who have partially violated them, though still considered in a qualified sense very eloquent, have failed to obtain the highest place. Nor, it may be safely said, would the irrelevant discussions, the florid declamation, the imaginative finery, the tawdry ornament, which too often disgrace the pulpit, — which too often are heard in it, not only without astonishment, but with admiration, — be tolerated for a moment in the senate or at the bar.

Much of this is no doubt to be attributed to the deplorable fact, that the great themes of religion are viewed (not by preachers alone, but by all mankind) with emotions so sadly disproportioned to their intrinsic importance. Hence the difficulty of finding the man who is as thoroughly interested in the subjects of religion as thousands are in discussions relating to the timber or sugar duties, — to a grant of public money, or a vote of supply. Even a trial at the Old Bailey for stealing a couple of pocket-handkerchiefs too often stirs deeper emotion, both in speakers and hearers, than the most momentous realities connected with the future and unseen world.

This, however, is only a partial solution of the difficulty; since the maxims we have above adverted to are often and grievously violated by multitudes of preachers, the consistency of whose lives, and whose diligent discharge of the ordinary duties of their office, bespeak them to be under the dominion of religious principle. Their failings, therefore, as public speakers, can be fairly accounted for only by their having adopted an erroneous idea of what the most effective style of speaking is; or, which is more frequent, from their never having attained any distinct idea of it at all.

We have long felt convinced that the eloquence of the pulpit, in its general character, has never been assimilated so far as it might have been, and ought to have been, to that which has produced the greatest effect elsewhere; and which is shown to be of the right kind both by the success which has attended it, and by the analysis of the qualities by which it has been distinguished. If we were compelled to give a brief definition of the principal characteristics of this truest style of eloquence, we should say it was "practical reasoning, animated by strong emotion"; or if we might be indulged in what is rather a description than a definition of it, we should say that it consisted in reasoning on topics calculated to inspire a common interest, expressed in the language of ordinary life, and in that brief, rapid, familiar style which natural emotion ever assumes. The former half of this description would condemn no small portion of the compositions called "Sermons," and the latter half a still larger portion.

We would not be misunderstood. It is far — very far — from our intention to speak in terms of the slightest depreciation of the immense treasures of learning, of acute disquisition, of profound speculation, of powerful controversy, which the literature of the English pulpit contains. In these points it cannot be surpassed. In vigor and originality of thought, in argumentative power, in extensive and varied erudition, it as far transcends all other literature of the same kind, as it is deficient in the qualities which are fitted to produce popular impression. We merely assert that the greater part of "Sermons" are not at all entitled to the name, if by it be meant discourses *specially adapted* to the object of instructing, convincing, or persuading the common mind.

We are well aware, that the very nature of pulpit eloquence forbids any thing more than a partial assimilation to that of the senate or the bar; — that certain modifications will be instantly suggested by the topics with which it deals, and the objects which it has in view. It must often be to a far greater extent simply didactic than eloquence of any other kind; though the practical purpose to which all matter of this sort is to be immediately applied, will still secure an earnestness and animation in the style in very observable contrast with the even tone and measured periods of literary disquisition. It never can appeal to those tumultuous passions, nor rouse those vehement feelings, which may be gladly abandoned to the arena of politics; while those sublime realities, connected with the future and the invisible, which form its great and inspiring themes, must necessarily demand more minute and ample description, in order vividly to impress the imagination, than would be readily tolerated either in deliberative or forensic eloquence. Still this is only saying, that, as a peculiar *species* of eloquence, it has something peculiar; as a species of the *genus*, it ought still to possess the generic qualities. The degree in which it can exhibit and embody those qualities is another question; and though it may be a point of some difficulty to ascertain how far this object may be attained, it is not difficult to show either that it might have been attained more completely than it has been, or that in many instances it has been neglected altogether.

We have said, for example, that the principal characteristic of all effective eloquence consists in reasoning on topics calculated to inspire a common interest in the mass of a common audience. Who can take even the most hasty inspection of our pulpit literature, without perceiving how generally this obvious attribute has been neglected, especially till within a comparatively recent period? What can be more hopeless than the attempt to engage the attention, or interest the feelings, of a common audience in metaphysical subtilties? And yet abstruse speculations on the "origin of evil," on "moral necessity," on the "self-determining power," on the "ultimate principles of ethics," on the "immortality of the soul," as proved from its indiscerptibility and we know not what, on the "eternal fitness of things," on the "moral sense," with other still more recondite speculations on themes which it is almost impious and perfectly useless to touch, were of common occurrence in our older pulpit literature; and they are not infrequent, though not pursued to the same extent, even now. For our own parts we believe that the discussion of such subjects is about as profitable in a popular assembly as would be that of the well-known questions, as to whether angels can pass from one point of space to another, without passing through the intermediate points, and whether they can visually discern objects in the dark. Dr. Donne has proposed a series of questions for over-refined speculators, in which he keenly satirizes all such superfluous subtilty. It is only to be lamented that he did not more effectually learn his own lesson in the composition of his own sermons; in some of which he has touched upon subjects more fit for Thomas Aquinas than the Christian preacher. We would not do even Thomas Aquinas injustice, however; we verily believe that the great schoolman would have stood aghast at the idea of dragging such questions out of the obscurity of the schools into common daylight, and making them the themes of popular declamation.

We gladly admit that the modern pulpit is fast outgrowing these extravagances; that such discussions are both less frequent, and pursued to a much more limited extent, than they used to be. Yet it is no uncommon thing to find the young preacher, fresh from his metaphysics or his philosophy, touching upon them just to a sufficient extent to exhaust and dissipate the attention of his audience before he comes to more important and more welcome matter; or indulging in allusions, and employing phraseology with reference to them wholly unintelligible to the mass. Others, and they form a much larger class, are fond of subjects which are only one degree less useful, and which, though they ought not to be excluded from the pulpit, need to be very rarely entered upon. We allude to the discussions connected with "Natural Theology," and the first "Principles of Morals." Such preachers are continually proving that there is a God, to those who readily admit there is a divine revelation; that the marks of design in the universe prove that there is an intelligent cause, to those who never had a single doubt upon the subject; that death is not an eternal sleep, to those who find no difficulty in admitting that there is a heaven and a hell; that man is a moral agent, to those who cannot even conceive that he can be otherwise; and that those first principles of ethics are certainly true, which even savages themselves would be ashamed to disavow. We say not that such topics should be excluded from the pulpit, but only that they should form a very inferior element in its ordinary prelections. The Atheist and Deist, though rarely found in Christian congregations, should not be entirely neglected; and those who are neither the one nor the other should certainly be in possession of arguments which may serve to confute both, and to give an intelligent reason "of the hope that is in them." But it may safely be taken for granted, in ordinary cases, that the great bulk of those who attend any Christian place of worship already believe all these things; in a word, admit the truth of that revelation, the exposition and enforcement of which are the preacher's proper object. What should we say to a member of Parliament who should treat the House of Commons (characteristically impatient of whatever does not bear on practical objects) to formal disquisitions on points on which all the members are agreed; — on the first principles of law and government, for example; or on any of those abstract questions which were discussed properly enough by Filmer and Locke. Allusions to such matters, so far as they bear on the matter in hand, and brief references to general principles which embrace the particular instances under discussion, are all that would be tolerated.

Even where the topics are not such as are fairly open to censure, a large class of preachers, especially amongst the young, grievously err by investing them with the technicalities of science and philosophy; either because they foolishly suppose they thereby give their compositions a more philosophical air, or because they disdain the homely and the vulgar. We remember hearing of a worthy man of this class, who, having occasion to tell his audience the simple truth, that there was not one Gospel for the rich and another for the poor, informed them, that, "if they would not be saved on 'general principles,' they could not be saved at all"! With such men it is not sufficient to say, that such and such a thing must be, but there is always a "moral or physical necessity" for it. The will is too old-fashioned a thing to be mentioned, and every thing is done by volition; duty is expanded into "moral obligation"; men not only *ought* to do this, that, or the other, it is always by "some principle of their moral nature"; they not only *like* to do so and so, but they are "impelled by some natural propensity"; men not only *think* and *do*, but they are never represented as thinking and doing without some parade of their "intellectual processes and active powers." Such discourses are full of "moral beauty," and "necessary relations," and "philosophical demonstrations," and "laws of nature," and "*a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments." If some simple fact of physical science is referred to in the way of argument or illustration, it cannot be presented in common language, but must be exhibited in the pomp of the most approved scientific technicalities. If there be a common and scientific name for the same object, ten to one that the latter is adopted. Heat straightway becomes "caloric," lightning, the "electric fluid"; instead of plants and animals, we are surrounded by "organized substances"; life is nothing half so good as the "vital principle"; "phenomena" of all kinds are very plentiful; these phenomena are "developed" and "combined," and "analyzed," and, in short, done every thing with, except being made intelligible. Not only is such language as this obscurely understood, or not understood at all, but even if perfectly understood, must necessarily be far less effective than those simple terms of common life, which for the most part may be substituted for them. The sermons of Augustus William Hare, referred to at the commencement of this essay, may serve to show how the abstract terms of philosophy may be advantageously translated into simple and racy English.*

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* The following extract from Dr. Campbell's "Lectures on Pulpit Eloquence" is worth notice: — "There is indeed a sort of literary diction, which sometimes the inexperienced are ready to fall into insensibly, from their having been much more accustomed to the school and to the closet, to the works of some particular schemer in philosophy, than to the scenes of real life and conversation. This fault, though akin to the former, is not so bad; as it may be without affectation, and when there is no special design of catching applause. It is, indeed, most commonly the consequence of an immoderate attachment to some one or other of the various systems of ethics or theology that have in modern times been published, and obtained a vogue among their respective partisans. Thus the zealous disciple of Shaftesbury, Akenside, and Hutcheson is no sooner licensed to preach the Gospel, than, with the best intentions in the world, he harangues the people from the pulpit on the moral sense and universal benevolence; he sets them to inquire whether there be a perfect conformity in their affections to the supreme symmetry established in the universe; he is full of the sublime and beautiful in things, the moral objects of right and wrong, and the proportional affection of a rational creature towards them. He speaks much of the inward music of the mind, the harmony and the dissonance of the passions; and seems, by his way of talking, to imagine, that if a man have this same moral sense,

Equally at variance with common sense are the topics which *some few* preachers, much addicted to Biblical criticism, but strangely ignorant of its practical uses, and the limits within which alone it can be properly applied, sometimes think proper to introduce into sermons. Their talk is much of "collations of manuscripts," of "various readings," of the "Vulgate," of "Coptic and Syriac versions," of "interpolations," of the "original languages," of "Hebrew points," &c., &c., &c. They totally forget, if they ever knew, that all these things are the mere instruments with which they work; and that the *results*, expressed in simple language, and without any ostentatious technicalities, are all with which the people have to do. If such a man were building a house, he would doubtless suffer the scaffolding to stand about it as a notable embellishment; or if he were employed to lay down a carpet, he would leave the hammer and nails upon the floor as memorials of his labor and ingenuity.

The selection of inappropriate topics is the more inexcusable, when we consider the large provision of subjects of enduring and universal interest which is made in the very Book which the preacher professes to interpret. He may freely expatiate over the ample circle of its doctrines and precepts, in all their applications to the endless diversities of life, and the endless peculiarities of individual character; he may find an equally legitimate province in the interpretation of difficult passages, or the reconciliation of apparent discrepancies; in the illustration of manners, customs, and antiquities; and in the elucidation of those ever-varied and deeply interesting narratives in which, for the profoundest reasons, the doctrines

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which he considers as the mental ear, in due perfection, he may tune his soul with as much ease as a musician tunes his musical instrument. The disciple of Dr. Clarke, on the contrary, talks to us in somewhat of a soberer strain and less pompous phrase, but not a jot more edifying, about unalterable reason and the eternal fitness of things, about the conformity of our actions to their immutable relations and essential differences." — Lecture III.

of Scripture are everywhere imbedded, — as if for the very purpose both of securing the requisite variety in pulpit discourses, and preventing the truths of religion from assuming the form of naked abstractions. Well would it be if in this respect, as well as in others, the preacher would make the Bible the object of his sedulous imitation. It is everywhere a practical book; it contains no over-curious speculations, no superfluous subtleties. On the contrary, as often remarked, there is a singular silence maintained in that volume on all that tends merely to gratify our curiosity. The very mysteries it discloses, it discloses only so far as is necessary for some practical purpose; whilst it everywhere views man just as in common life man views himself and his fellows, — recognizing at once, without discussion, all those facts connected with our intellectual and moral constitution, the true theory of which has occasioned such endless differences and inquiries in the schools.

If the topics selected by the preacher have often been very little calculated to inspire interest in the mass of a common audience, it is equally true, that, where they are liable to no such objection, the mode of treating them has as often been any thing but popular. The argumentation is often too subtle or too comprehensive; or a too solicitously logical form is given to its expression. Unity of subject, indeed, there ought to be, and must be; that is, where the discourse is a "sermon," and not an "exposition." But it is one thing to exhibit that one subject by rapidly and powerfully touching those points which the common mind can seize and appreciate, and quite another to exhibit it after the manner of Euclid or Dr. Clarke. Unity of subject is a characteristic of Demosthenes; but continuous or subtle ratiocination never is. He *reasons*, indeed, perpetually, for reasoning, as already said, is the staple of all effective eloquence; but never was a truer criticism than that of Lord Brougham, — "that his reasonings are not of the nature of continuous demonstration, and by no means resemble a chain of mathematical or metaphysical arguments." The following observations are well worthy the attention of every speaker: — "If by this" (the assertion that Demosthenes is chiefly characterized by reasoning) "is only meant that he never wanders from the subject, that each remark tells upon the matter in hand, that all his illustrations are brought to bear upon the point, and that he is never found making any step in any direction which does not advance his main object, and lead towards the conclusion to which he is striving to bring his hearers, the observation is perfectly just; for this is a distinguishing feature in the character of his eloquence. It is not, indeed, his grand excellence, because every thing depends upon the manner in which he pursues this course; the course itself being one quite as open to the humblest mediocrity as to the highest genius. But if it is meant to be said that those Attic orators, and especially their great chief, made speeches in which long chains of elaborated reasoning are to be found, nothing can be less like the truth. *A variety of topics are handled in succession, all calculated to strike the audience.*"

We admit, however, that it is impossible to lay down any universal rule on this point. Different men will treat their subjects with more or less of logical severity, according to the structure of their own understandings; and, what is more, will form to themselves audiences who will appreciate their methods. A general caution against the extremes adverted to, is all that can be given. But in order more effectually to guard against the faults in question, we are inclined to believe that it would be well if the ancient system of "Homilies," or expositions of considerable passages, were more frequently resorted to. If well executed, especially when the subjects are historical, we are disposed to think they would both be more fruitful of instruction, and secure, by variety of topics, a stronger hold upon the attention of a common audience. We are aware, indeed, that to present such subjects judiciously, to make the transitions easy and natural, and to secure something like unity of plan, notwithstanding the great variety of the materials, would require quite as much labor as the construction of a sermon on some single topic, — probably more. And for this very reason we do not think it would be at all fair to judge of the effects of such expositions by what commonly pass under that name, in which a large portion of text is often taken in order to *save* trouble ; — the preacher erroneously supposing, that, where he has so much to talk about, he cannot fail to have enough to say, and that he may therefore dispense with a diligent preparation. He forgets that, if the field be very wide, there may be the greater danger, unless he takes due care, of losing himself in it. We have heard of a preacher of this stamp, who alleged, as a reason for resorting to the expository method, that when he was " persecuted in one text, he could flee unto another." Chrysostom, in his very best moods, admirably exemplifies the homiletic style here contended for.*

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* Whitefield's sermons very often consist of little more than a familiar and lively exposition of a parable, or some short portion of narrative ; and to this, we have no doubt, they owed no slight degree of their popularity. The sermons of Whitefield have come down to us in a very imperfect form. They are, for the most part, mere notes of what he said. It has often been remarked, that his sermons are strangely destitute of vigorous or original thought. Though it is certain they have greatly suffered from the mutilated form in which they have reached us, we must confess it does not appear to us that the sermons are very deficient in those qualities of thought or expression which we have represented as so essential to popular eloquence. It is true they often want method and arrangement, are disfigured by repetitions, extravagances, and frequent and gross violations of taste. These are to be attributed partly to the cause above specified, that is, the imperfect manner in which his sermons have been preserved, partly to the character of his own mind, and partly to the age. If, indeed, any one look for profound speculation, or continuous and subtle reasoning, in these sermons, he will be disappointed; but so far from wondering on that account that they should have produced such an effect, he will feel, if he know any thing of the philosophy of popular eloquence, that they could not have pro-

As we have said that we wish preachers would let the Scriptures determine for them to what classes of subjects they should limit themselves, so we wish that they would imitate the same book in their general mode of treating the topics it supplies. There, assuredly, as Lord Brougham says of Demosthenes, the reasonings are not "chains of continuous ratiocination." The book is constructed with far too profound a knowledge of human nature for *that.* To use the expressive language already quoted, "a variety of topics are handled in succession, all calculated to strike the common mind." This is the very characteristic of the discourses of our Lord ; and in this, as well as in all other respects, they are worthy of the profound study of the Christian preacher. A few philosophers would, no doubt, prefer a very different method ; and have often very unphilosophically complained of Scripture, because its method is not their method. But we are not speaking of what philosophers would best like, but what is most calculated to impress the common mind.

We shall now proceed to offer a few observations on those properties of style which peculiarly belong to the most effective eloquence. It was remarked, that it is characterized by that brief, rapid, familiar, and natural manner which a mind in earnest ever assumes. It is best illustrated by the style of a man engaged in conversation on some serious subject, — intent, for example, on convincing his neighbor of some important truth, or persuading him to some course of conduct. The public speaker will often manifest, it is true, greater

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duced such an effect, if they had been characterized by these qualities. It is certain they could not have been destitute of the principal qualities, whether of thought or of style, which constitute popular eloquence ; and we think that even now, amidst great deformities, those qualities may be not obscurely traced in them. Preaching, of which the fastidious Hume said, that it was "worth going twenty miles to hear it," — which interested the infidel Bolingbroke, and warmed even the cool and cautious Franklin for once into enthusiasm, — must have possessed great merit, independently of the charms of voice, gesture, and manner.

dignity or vehemence, (the natural result of speaking on a more important theme, and to a larger audience,) but there will be the same general characteristics still; the same colloquial, but never vulgar diction; the same homely illustrations; the same brevity of expression; — in a word, all those peculiarities which mark a man absorbed in his subject, and simply anxious to give the most forcible expression to his thoughts and feelings. It is not very easy to give an analysis of this peculiar style by an enumeration of its qualities; but it is instantly recognized wherever it is found, whether addressed to the eye or to the ear.*

The chief characteristics of this peculiar style are abhorrence of the ornate and the glittering, of the pompous and the florid; jealousy of epithets, a highly idiomatic and homely diction, a love of brevity and condensation, a freedom from stateliness and formality; rapid changes of construction, frequent recurrence to the interrogative, — not to mention numberless other indications of vivacity and animation, marked in speech by the most rapid and varied changes of voice and gesture. Of all its characteristics, the most striking and the most universal is the moderate use of the imagination. Now, as lively emotion always stimulates the imagination, it may at first sight appear paradoxical that this should be a characteristic at all. But a little reflection will explain this; for every one must recollect, that, if a speaker is in earnest, he never employs his imagination as the poet does, merely to delight us; nor, indeed, to delight us at all, — except as appropriate imagery, though used for another object, necessarily imparts pleasure. For this reason, illustrations are selected always with reference to their force rather than their beauty; and are very generally marked more by their homely propriety than by their grace and elegance. For the same reason, wherever it is possible, they are thrown into the brief form of metaphor; and here Aristotle, with his usual sagacity, observes that the metaphor is the only trope in which the orator may freely indulge. Every thing marks the man intent upon serious business, whose sole anxiety is to convey his meaning with as much precision and energy as possible to the minds of his auditors. But with the poet, whose very object is to delight us, or even with the prose-writer, in those species of prose which have the same object, the case is widely different. He may employ two or more images, if they are but appropriate and elegant, where the orator would employ but one, and that perhaps the simplest and homeliest; he may throw in an epithet merely to suggest some picturesque circumstance, or to give greater minuteness and vivacity to description; he may sometimes indulge in a more flowing and graceful expression than the orator would venture upon; that is, whenever harmony will better answer his object than energy. What does it matter to him who is walking for walking's sake, how long he lingers amidst the beautiful, or how often he pauses to drink in at leisure the melody and the fragrance of nature? But the man who is pressing on to his journey's end cannot afford time for such luxurious loitering. The utmost he can do is to snatch here and there a homely floweret from the dusty hedge-row, and eagerly pursue his way. So delicate is the perception attained by a highly cultivated taste of the proprieties of all grave and earnest composition, that it not only feels at enmity with the meretricious or viciously ornate, but immediately perceives that the greatest beauties of certain species of prose composition would become little better than downright bombast, if transplanted into any composition the object of which was serious. We may illustrate this by referring to a passage of acknowledged beauty, — the description, in the "Antiquary," of the sunset preceding the storm there so grandly delineated. "The sun was now resting his huge disc upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendor gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapors, forming out of their unsubstantial gloom the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red. The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary, and the splendid coloring of the clouds amidst which he was setting." No one in reading this passage can help admiring its graphic beauty: the numerous epithets, considering the purpose for which they are employed, — that of detaining the mind upon every picturesque circumstance, and giving vividness and fidelity to the whole picture, — appear no more frequent than they ought to be. But suppose some naval historian, who has occasion to narrate the movements of two hostile fleets (separated on the eve of battle by a storm), should suddenly pause to introduce a similar description; — would not the effect be so ridiculous, that no one could read to the end of the passage without bursting into laughter?

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* No writer on rhetoric (if we except Aristotle) has been so uniformly alive to the peculiarities of this style, or has so happily illustrated them, as Dr. Whately. It must also be admitted, that his own writings furnish many admirable exemplifications of his own maxims. It is well when precept is enforced by example.

It is against such a style that the young preacher, especially if he has, or thinks he has, a brilliant imagination, is called to be jealously on his guard; and the more so, as the very themes on which he is often called to speak really require a certain fulness of description to bring them with sufficient fidelity and vividness before the mind of the hearer. But let him beware how he throws in epithets, and employs images, merely because he thinks them beautiful or picturesque. As regards real impression, there is no style which has so little practical effect, even when there is real genius in it. In general, that style is characterized by any thing but genius. There are some examples of it, however, to which this remark would not apply: it certainly would not to some of the sermons of Jeremy Taylor. That this style is often extravagantly admired is quite true; nay, even the downright florid is not without its admirers; but it is not the less ineffective for all that. This very admiration, as it is too often the subtle motive which has beguiled the speaker into such a vicious mode of treating his subject, so it at once affords a solution of the seeming paradox; for it shows that the minds of the auditors are fixed rather upon the man than upon the subject, — less upon the truths inculcated than upon the genius which has embellished them. The speaker has been ambitious to attract the eye to himself and his doings, and it must be admitted that he too often succeeds; but it is at the expense of what is his *avowed*, and ought to be his *real*, object. If we cannot endure this style in the public speaker, even where there is intrinsic beauty in it, simply because we do not think it natural that a man in earnest should indulge in all this wanton dalliance with imagination, how much more repulsive is that far more frequent style which is but a mockery of it, in which there is a constant *effort* to be fine, — where there is not only excess of ornament, but all of a bad kind! The former style may be natural to the *man*, — as in the case of Jeremy Taylor, — however unnatural in relation to the subject and the occasion; the latter is alike unnatural in relation to both.

As the severe style for which we contend is best illustrated by examples, we shall mention two or three of those who have strikingly exemplified it. And, as we are speaking simply of style, the authors to whom we shall refer are selected without relation to the systems of doctrine which they preached, and without implying either approbation or censure in that point of view. If the whole of those who have illustrated the principles here expounded were given, the catalogue would not be very long. It is true, that this style is more frequently cultivated than it was; and, if it were not invidious to refer to living preachers, we might mention not a few, both in the Establishment and out of it, who have attained it in a very high degree; some few in whom it is found nearly in perfection. But if we search the printed literature of the pulpit, it is not one sermon in a thousand that possesses any traces of it. The style is often that of stately or elegant disquisition, — often of loose and florid declamation, — but rarely indeed do we recognize the qualities of what Aristotle has happily and aptly called the "agonistical" or "wrestling" style; — that style by which a speaker *earnestly strives* to make a *present* audience see and feel what he wishes them to see and feel. A large portion of our sermons differ not at all in style from that of a theological treatise, or a philosophical essay; and they may be read by the individual in the closet, without the slighest suspicion, were it not for the assurance on the title-page, that they were discourses delivered to a public audience. We would fain believe that the printed sermons of many of our preachers have in this respect done injustice to their ordinary discourses, and that they have been greatly altered previous to publication. In one case, and that a striking one, we know that this belief is well founded. We allude to perhaps the greatest of modern English preachers, the late Robert Hall. The few discourses which he so elaborately prepared for the press, are full of exquisite thoughts, expressed in most exquisite language; but the style is almost everywhere that of disquisition, and in no sensible degree different from what he has adopted in his "Apology for the Freedom of the Press," or his work on "Terms of Communion." Now it is well known that his ordinary discourses were distinguished by a much higher degree of those qualities of style for which we have been so earnestly contending; and there can be little difficulty in affirming that, *in this one point of view*, many of the sermons which were imperfectly taken down in shorthand from his own lips, are superior to the most polished of those compositions which he slowly elaborated for the press.

But though it is difficult to point out many specimens of the style in question, such specimens are to be found. Of all the English preachers, probably those who have been most strongly marked by the peculiarities of the true genius for public speaking, are Latimer, South, and Baxter; and, notwithstanding some defects, and those not inconsiderable, they are also probably the preachers in whom specimens of the style we are speaking of will be found the most frequent and perfect.

The first of these certainly possessed talents for the most effective eloquence in a high degree. Indeed, it may be said of many of the preachers of the Reformation, that, though their uncouthness, quaintness, ridiculous or trivial allusions, wearisome tautologies and digressions, incessant violations of taste and disregard of method, render it difficult to read them, they are in many important points very superior to the more erudite and profound preachers of the next century. The subjects they selected were such as more generally interested the common mind. These subjects are briefly touched and rapidly varied. Though the structure of the sentences is often most uncouth, (as might be expected from the state of the language,) the diction is more idiomatic and purely English; while the general manner is decidedly more that of downright earnestness, — more direct and pungent. This effect is in a great measure to be attributed to the circumstances in which they were placed. In that great controversy to which they consecrated their lives, they appealed to the *people*, and were naturally led both to adapt their subjects to the popular mind, and to express themselves in the popular language. The preachers of the next century were men who lived in seclusion, — far from common life, buried among books, and incessantly reading and often writing in a foreign tongue. To all this it is owing that their subjects and their style are too often as little adapted to produce popular impression as those of Thomas Aquinas himself.

Of all the English preachers, South seems to us to furnish, in point of *style*, the truest specimens of the most effective species of pulpit eloquence. We are speaking, it must be remembered, simply of his style: we offer no opinion on the degree of truth or error in the system of doctrines he embraced; and for his unchristian bitterness and often unseemly wit, would be the last to offer any apology. But his robust intellect, his shrewd common sense, his vehement feelings, and a fancy always more distinguished by force than by elegance, admirably qualified him for a powerful public speaker. His style is accordingly marked by all the characteristics which might naturally be expected from the possession of such qualities. It is everywhere direct, condensed, pungent. His sermons are well worthy of frequent and diligent perusal by every young preacher. He has himself taught, both by precept and example, the chief peculiarities of that style for which we are pleading, in a discourse on Luke xxi. 15: "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." In one passage of this sermon he takes occasion to expose the folly of that florid declamation to which his manly intellect and taste were so little likely to extend indulgence. In doing this, he introduces some brief specimens of the style which he condemns. Though he mentions no names, and though we might be unable to refer the expressions to any particular author, any one might be sure, from the expressions themselves, that he intended his admonitions for the special benefit of his illustrious contemporary, Jeremy Taylor. More bold than courteous, he has been at no pains to *invent* expressions for his purpose, but has actually selected them out of Taylor's own writings. There is certainly some malice in the passage; but it is itself so impressive an example of the style he is recommending, that we cannot refrain from extracting it:—"'I speak the words of soberness,' said St. Paul, and I preach the Gospel not with the 'enticing words of man's wisdom.' This was the way of the Apostle's discoursing of things sacred. Nothing here 'of the fringes of the north star'; nothing 'of nature's becoming unnatural'; nothing of the 'down of angels' wings, or the beautiful locks of cherubims': no starched similitudes introduced with a 'Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion,' and the like. No, — these were sublimities above the rise of the Apostolic spirit. For the Apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps, and to tell the world in plain terms, that he who believed should be saved, and that he who believed not should be damned. And this was the dialect which pierced the conscience, and made the hearers cry out, Men and brethren, what shall we do? It tickled not the ear, but sunk into the heart; and when men came from such sermons, they never commended the preacher for his taking voice, or gesture; for the fineness of such a simile, or the quaintness of such a sentence; but they spoke like men conquered with the overpowering force and evidence of the most concerning truths; much in the words of the two disciples going to Emmaus,— *Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the Scriptures?*

"In a word, the Apostles' preaching was therefore mighty and successful, because plain, natural, and familiar, and by no means above the capacity of their hearers: nothing being more preposterous, than for those who were professedly aiming at men's hearts, to miss the mark by shooting over their heads." *

We are tempted to give another short extract from this great preacher; we might select some which would still better illustrate our present subject, but they would be too long. The following is from his sermon entitled "Good Inclinations no Excuse for Bad Actions":—"The third instance, in which men use to plead the will instead of the deed, shall be on duties of cost and expense. Let a business of expensive charity be proposed; and then, as I showed before, that in matters of labor the lazy person could find no hands wherewith to work, so neither in this case can the religious miser find any hand wherewith to give. It is wonderful to consider, how a command or call to be liberal, either upon a civil or religious account, all of a sudden impoverishes the rich, breaks the merchant, shuts up every private man's exchequer, and makes those men in a minute have nothing at all to give, who, at the very same instant, want nothing to spend. So that instead of relieving the poor, such a command strangely increases their number, and transforms rich men into beggars presently. For, let the danger of their prince and country knock at their purses, and call upon them to contribute against a public enemy or calamity, then immediately they have nothing, and their riches (as Solomon expresses it) never fail to make themselves wings, and to fly away." *

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* South's "Sermons," Vol. IV. pp. 152, 153.

Of the preachers of the seventeenth century, Baxter possessed, as largely as any, those endowments which are essential to the best kind of popular eloquence. He presents the same combination of vigorous intellect and vehement feeling which distinguished South; but he conjoined with these a devotion far more pure and ethereal, and a benevolence most ardent and sincere. It is a pity that the slovenly manner in which he threw off his works, and which was too commonly the fault of the age in which he lived, has deformed so large a portion of them by repetitions and redundances. Continuous excellence is not to be looked for, indeed, in any of the writers of that period. There are single passages of great power occurring here and there, but imbedded in a mass of deformities, — gems of marvellous value and splendor incrusted in their native earth. Numerous as Baxter's defects in point of style are, he often presents us with passages which are genuine examples of the most effective pulpit eloquence, and, if our space would permit, we should be glad to insert some of them. Baxter was almost equally distinguished by those talents which go to form a great public speaker (hence his constant desire to make a direct and practical use of

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* South's "Sermons," Vol. I. pp. 278, 279.

all his knowledge), and by that excursiveness and subtilty of intellect which impels to a thorough investigation of every subject, however worthless. It is not a little ludicrous sometimes to see these two propensities of his intellect struggling for the mastery. At one time he forms a magnanimous resolution to forego speculations which are curiously useless, and the next is found deep in the discussion of them. Thus, in his "Dying Thoughts," after telling us of the futility of the greater part of those questions which relate to the *modes* of existence in a future world, he proceeds very deliberately to expend about threescore pages in the examination of some of them!

Even in Jeremy Taylor, the exuberance of whose imagination too often betrayed him into puerilities and extravagances which are utterly inconsistent with true eloquence, and whose cumbrous erudition perpetually suggested allusions and phraseology equally inconsistent with it, passages which in a considerable degree illustrate the style in question are not seldom to be found. Take the following from his sermon entitled "Christ's Advent to Judgment": — "And because very many sins are sins of society and confederation, it is a hard and a weighty consideration what shall become of any one of us who have tempted our brother or sister to sin and death: for though God hath spared our life, and they are dead, and their debt-books are sealed up till the day of account, yet the mischief of our sin has gone before us, and it is like a murder, but more execrable; the soul is dead in trespasses and sins, and sealed up to an eternal sorrow; and thou shalt see at doomsday what damnable uncharitableness thou hast done. That soul that cries to those rocks to cover her, if it had not been for thy perpetual temptations, might have followed the Lamb in a white robe; and that poor man, that is clothed with shame and flames of fire, would have shined in glory, but that thou didst force him to be partner of thy baseness. And who shall pay for this loss? a soul is lost by thy means; thou hast defeated the holy purposes of the Lord's bitter passion by thy impurities; and what shall happen to thee, by whom thy brother dies eternally?"

Of recent writers there is none with whom we are acquainted, who, in point of *diction*, so well deserves to be a model, as the late Augustus William Hare, to whom reference has been already made. We by no means assert that (as was the case with Latimer, South, or Baxter) the general structure of his intellect was that which plainly predestines a man to be a great public speaker. Of many of the qualifications of one he was certainly possessed; and it is equally certain that his early death, and the humble sphere to which his talents were restricted, render it impossible to say what he might have become. He possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of making difficult things plain; of setting obvious truths in novel lights; of illustrating them by familiar images; and of expressing them in a style habitually animated, and now and then singularly vivacious. His sermons to a "Country Congregation" will probably disappoint, by their very simplicity, the highly cultivated and intelligent, — for whom, indeed, they were never intended; although we cannot conceal our opinion, that the extreme simplicity of the language would often deceive even such readers as to the value and importance of the thoughts it expresses. But for an illiterate audience, — an audience of rustics, — they appear to us, in point of *diction*, perfect models of what discourses ought to be.

Their author was a man of powerful intellect, and of the most varied accomplishments, and affords a striking example of the success with which high endowments may be made subservient to a very humble object, whenever a man is honestly bent upon so employing them. His great knowledge, instead of being employed for ostentation's sake, only taught him more precisely what was to be done, and how he ought to set about it. To the most extensive acquaintance with ancient and modern literature, he added no inconsiderable knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, and consequently possessed (what no public speaker should be without) an acquaintance with the capabilities and resources of his mother-tongue, — with the vocabulary and idioms of the *people*. When he left Cambridge to undertake the charge of a congregation in a remote rural district, he resolved so to express himself that all should understand him; and his eminent success shows what may be done by one who forms a definite notion of the style he ought to adopt, and deliberately bends his best energies to attain it. The above-mentioned sermons to a "Country Congregation," we consider a greater triumph of his genius than all the splendid acquisitions he had made; and if Dr Johnson's sentiment be true, that a "voluntary descent from the dignity of science is perhaps the hardest lesson that humility can teach," the triumph of his humility was still greater than that of his genius.

We are well aware of the many difficulties which beset the man who honestly resolves to speak only in the style we have recommended; — difficulties sometimes arising from the intellectual pursuits to which he has been necessarily addicted, — sometimes from the peculiarity of his own mental character. Nursed in the lap of learning, and familiar with the language of science and literature; necessitated, in the very course of those preparatory studies which form an essential part of his professional education, to read much in foreign tongues, and to prosecute profound or abstruse inquiries, he will be apt, insensibly, to select subjects, or adopt a style, utterly inconsistent with pulpit eloquence. He may still more frequently be betrayed into such conduct by affectation and vanity. The very peculiarities of his own mental constitution may expose him more fatally to the danger, and require continual efforts to counteract them. If he be a philosopher, he will be tempted to indulge too much in abstruse speculation, or to treat those subjects on which he may rightfully expatiate in a *philosophic manner*, — in language too abstract and remote from common life. If he have a brilliant imagination, he will often be tempted to employ it inopportunely or to excess, and will find it hard to restrain it within the moderate limits in which alone it can be useful. In order to counteract the accidental evils arising from the necessary prosecution of various branches of study, which, in relation to public speaking, may injuriously affect the habits of thought or of expression, it is proper that every one who is destined for such engagements should cultivate acquaintance with the most idiomatic writers, — understand the genius and resources of his own language, — the modes of thought and expression prevalent amongst the common people, — and, above all, be diligent in the perusal of the best models of that severe and manly eloquence of which we have said so much. The success of Mr. Hare may serve to show how much may be done by honesty and diligence. Nor can it fail to encourage the young preacher to know, that, if he gets but a clear idea of the task which he has to perform, and honestly resolves to perform it, there is not one of those things which we have mentioned as possible impediments, that may not be made to facilitate his object. All that is requisite is a determination, that, as he has a practical object in view, every thing shall be strictly subordinated to it. Philosophy, for example, may be made useful; but it must be principally by teaching him to understand the mechanism and movements of that mind on which he is to operate. The audience must not perceive or suspect that the speaker is following the suggestions of any such invisible guide; or, if it be employed directly at all, it still must be unsuspected by the common people to *be* philosophy: it must be employed merely to insure greater accuracy and comprehensiveness in the views propounded; and to determine the circumspect limits within which every subject must be treated; — that is, so far, and so far only, as it may be made conducive to a practical end. In a word, it must be philosophy without the forms of it; philosophy in its working dress; philosophy that has learned one of its hardest lessons, that it is often the truest philosophy not to appear such. In like manner, the speaker may have a knowledge of logic; but it must be seen only in the greater perspicuity of his statements, and the greater closeness of his reasoning. He must never trouble the people with the mysteries of mood and figure, or bewilder them with a single unintelligible technicality. He may possess a knowledge of rhetoric; but he is not to confound his audience with the distinctions of trope and metaphor, — with the uses of synecdoches or metonymies, — with those principles of the human mind which give them energy, — or the rules by which, at the very time he is speaking, he is regulating his own taste in the employment of them. Here is a "hard lesson! who can hear it?" To be employing profound and extensive knowledge without suffering those you address to know any thing of the matter! To be contented to produce results which seem cheap and common, without once lifting the curtain to bewilder and dazzle the multitude with a sight of the imposing and complicated machinery which is revolving behind it!

It is happily unnecessary to caution the modern preacher against many of the abuses which pervade our older pulpit literature, — especially that of the seventeenth century; — a period, notwithstanding, in which many of our most eminent preachers flourished. We allude more particularly to the abuse of *learning*. Most of the sermons of that age are full of quotations, absolutely unintelligible to the common people. Numberless passages of Jeremy Taylor, in particular, are little better than a curious tessellation of English, Greek, and Latin. The people, however strange the fact may appear, came at last not merely to like these displays, but to be sometimes discontented if they did not hear a great deal which they could not understand! It is recorded of the profoundly learned Pococke, that when he successfully studied to divest his pulpit style of the traces of erudition, and, with a magnanimity and good sense very unusual in that age, made it a point to say nothing but what the people could understand, his congregation absolutely despised his simplicity, and said that "Master Pococke, though a very good man, *was no Latiner*." And South tells us, "that the grossest, the most ignorant and illiterate country people, were of all men the fondest of high-flown metaphors and allegories, *attended and set off with scraps of Greek and Latin*, though not able even to read so much of the latter as might save their necks upon occasion."

Equally unnecessary is it to caution the preacher against those complicated divisions and subdivisions into which our forefathers thought proper to chop up their discourses, to the entire frustration of the very object they had in view, and the utter discomfiture of the most retentive memory. In one discourse of Bishop Hall's, we have counted no less than eighty heads, principal and subordinate, — in one of Baxter's, not less than one hundred and twenty, besides a formidable array of "improvements." But the most amusing examples of this abuse are those recorded in Robinson's notes to Claude's Essay "On the Composition of a Sermon": — "But allowing the necessity of a *natural* and easy division, it does by no means follow that these are to multiply into whole armies. A hundred years ago most sermons had thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty particulars. There is a sermon of Mr. Lye's on 1 Cor. vi. 17, *the terms of which*, says he, *I shall endeavor, by God's assistance, clearly to explain*. This he does in thirty particulars, *for the fixing of it on a right basis*, and then adds fifty-six more to *explain* the subject, in all eighty-six. And what makes it the more astonishing is his introduction to all these, which is this: Having thus *beaten up and levelled* our way to the text, I shall not stand *to shred the words into any unnecessary* parts, but shall *extract* out of them such *an observation* as I conceive *strikes a full eighth* to the mind of the spirit of God.

"If Mr. Lye is too prolific, what shall we say to Mr. Drake, whose sermon has (if I reckon rightly) above a hundred and seventy parts, besides queries and solutions; and yet the good man says he *passed sundry useful points*, *pitch-*

ing only on that which comprehended the marrow and substance."

Equally superfluous would it be to caution the modern preacher against the quaintnesses, the quirks and quibbles, the fantastic imagery, the alliterations, and other curious devices of composition, in which many of our older writers so much delighted. In truth, the tendency is all the other way. In the laudable effort to avoid the *vulgar*, there is not unfrequently a danger of sinking down into tame propriety. Our old writers, in their free and reckless resort to every mode of stimulating attention, were often, it is true, betrayed into gross violations of taste ; but the very same audacity of genius also often produced great felicities, both of imagery and diction. The too frequent characteristic of modern discourses is what the Germans would denominate "Wasserigkeit," "waterishness" : there is little to *strike*, either the one way or the other ; all is blameless commonplace, accurate insipidity.

We now proceed, conformably with the intention mentioned at the commencement of this essay, to offer a few remarks on what we conceive to be the two chief causes of the mediocrity of the generality of sermons. One of them in our opinion is, that too little time is given to the preparation of public discourses. Far be it from us to involve in indiscriminate censure the thousands of preachers whom we have never heard, or to pronounce absolutely on the indolence or the industry even of those to whom we have listened. We only think that the failing in question is not a very partial one, from the internal evidence supplied by the sermons of no inconsiderable number of the different preachers whom we have heard. We are also willing to admit, that the duties of the pulpit are not the only duties which claim the attention of the Christian minister ; and that his other engagements, in an age like this, are neither few nor small. But we must also contend, that, as his principal office is that of public instructor, the duties of that office must ever be his chief business; and that, to whatever extent he may undertake other engagements, he should sacredly reserve sufficient time for the due discharge of his proper functions. The construction of a discourse which shall be adapted in matter, arrangement, and style, to produce a strong impression upon a popular audience, seems a task which requires much more time and labor than, as we conceive, are generally bestowed upon it. But we are convinced that this task, difficult as it is, might be performed much better than it generally is. We are well aware, of course, that there must always be an immense interval between the productions of a man of genius and those of a man who has no genius at all, — between those of a fertile intellect and those of a barren one; but there are few men possessed of that measure of vigor and elasticity of mind, without which they have no business out of the rank of handicraftsmen, who could not, with diligence, compose a discourse which might be generally useful and interesting, at least much more so than discourses are often found to be. Prolonged study and meditation are never without their reward. Either some new materials are collected, or they strike by a new arrangement, or some new truth is elicited, or some old truth is exhibited under a new aspect, or illustrated in a manner which gives it an importance never felt before, and extends its influence from the understanding to the imagination, and thence to the affections. Such sources of interest as these are sure to reveal themselves, sooner or later, to the mind that honestly and diligently sets itself to seek them with the conviction that they are to be had, and that they must be obtained.*

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* How much force is imparted to the most familiar and obvious truths in the following passages, merely by the novel mode of exhibiting them?

"'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' — If an inhabitant of some distant part of the universe — some angel who had never visited the earth — had been told that there was a world in which such an invitation had been neglected and despised, Without intending to implicate Christian ministers generally in the charge now made, it will not be denied that the internal evidence of many a discourse justifies us in saying that it is widely applicable. In the first place, it can hardly be affirmed that those give time enough to their sermons who give none at all; who, if they are ever eloquent, are eloquent at other people's expense; who are contented to be wholesale plagiarists, and to shine Sunday after Sunday in borrowed finery, —

"And cheat the eyes
Of gallery critics with a thousand arts."

We well know all the arguments by which this combination of vanity and indolence usually supports itself. The principal is, that a man of little talent can buy or borrow a much

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they would surely say: The inhabitants of that world must be a very happy people; there can be few among them that 'labor and are heavy laden.' No doubt they must be strangers to poverty, sorrow, and misfortune; the pestilence cannot come nigh their dwelling, neither does death ever knock at their doors, and of course they must be unconnected with sin, and all the miseries that are its everlasting attendants." — Wolfe's *Remains*.

"Though the arguments which the Christian hath for his faith may not be the strongest, yet a tree but weakly rooted often brings forth good fruit; and if it doth, will never be hewn down and cast into the fire." — Secker's *Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 20.

The following is a passage from Hare's sermon on the text, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one who is indebted to us": —

"Conceive a revengeful, unforgiving man repeating this prayer, which you all, I hope, repeat daily. Conceive a man with a heart full of wrath against his neighbor, with a memory which treasures up the little wrongs, and insults, and provocations he fancies himself to have received from that neighbor. Conceive such a man praying to God Most High to forgive him his trespasses as he forgives the man who has trespassed against him. What, in the mouth of such a man, do these words mean? They mean — but, that you may more fully understand their meaning, I will turn them into a prayer, which we will call the prayer of the unforgiving man: — 'O God, I have sinned against thee many times from my youth up until now. I have often been forgetful of thy goodness;

better sermon than he can make. We freely acknowledge it, and should not make so great an objection to the practice, if the preacher would avow the fact. This we think common honesty requires; but if it be felt, as every one must feel, that such an avowal would put the speaker to shame, or, if *he* were past that, would make his audience ashamed for him, it is a tacit admission of the impropriety of the practice.

But we think the argument altogether fallacious. Supposing the preacher not to be destitute of that measure of talent without which he has no business to assume the office of a public instructor at all, we deny *in toto* that a borrowed discourse, whatever its merit, can be so impressive as one, even though intrinsically inferior, which has been made his own by conscientious study. The latter is the fruit of diligent effort; prolonged meditation will insure familiarity with the

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I have not daily thanked thee for thy mercies; I have neglected thy service; I have broken thy laws; I have done many things utterly wrong against thee. All this I know, and besides this, doubtless, I have committed many secret sins which, in my blindness, I have failed to notice. Such is my guiltiness, O Lord, in thy sight. Deal with me, I beseech thee, even as I deal with my neighbor. He has not offended me one tenth, one hundredth part as much as I have offended thee; but he has offended me very grievously, and I cannot forgive him. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, as I deal with him. He has been very ungrateful to me, though not a tenth, not a hundredth part as ungrateful as I have been to thee; yet I cannot overlook such base and shameful ingratitude. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, as I deal with him. I remember and treasure up every little trifle which shows how ill he has behaved to me. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, as I deal with him. I am determined to take the very first opportunity of doing him an ill turn. Deal with me, I beseech thee, O Lord, as I deal with him." Can any thing be more shocking and horrible than such a prayer? Is not the very sound of it enough to make one's blood run cold? Yet this is just the prayer which the unforgiving man offers up every time he repeats the Lord's prayer; for he prays to God to forgive him in the same manner in which he forgives his neighbor. But he does not forgive his neighbor; so he prays to God not to forgive him. God grant that his prayer may not be heard, for he is praying a curse on his own head!" — Hare's *Sermons,* Vol. II. pp. 297 - 299.

subject, and both together insure, what nothing else can, adequate *emotion.* It will, accordingly, be delivered with an earnestness and glow of natural feeling, of which the reading of a borrowed discourse is altogether destitute. The treasures of theological literature, — whatever is valuable in other men's thoughts, — are freely open to the preacher; but he should ever seek to make them his own by new combinations, arrangement, and expression. The matter he borrows should be made his by chemical affinities with his own thoughts, not by mere mechanical appropriation.

As to those discourses which are commonly called extemporaneous, we mean extemporaneous with regard to the *expression*, for the bulk of the thoughts ought never to be extemporaneous, it is our firm belief that no inconsiderable portion to which the Christian communities of this country are treated, are hastily huddled up on the evening preceding their delivery. But we believe that not a few are quite as extemporaneous in relation to the *thought*, as they are in relation to the expression. When this is the case, the fact usually proclaims itself with sufficient clearness; the painful process by which the mind is endeavoring to manufacture the material as the discourse proceeds, is abundantly visible both in face and manner. The frequent hesitation, the curiously bewildered look, the endless repetitions of commonplace, the wire-drawing of obvious truths, — all unequivocally proclaim the speaker's unenviable confusion and embarrassment, his utter bankruptcy of intellect. The wonder is, that any man who has felt the misery of such an exhibition, or subjected his congregation to the pain of witnessing it, should ever again allow himself to be found in so painful a situation.

Even of discourses where the thoughts are not properly extemporaneous, — and if the subject has been duly pondered, the matter properly distributed, and the principal illustrations selected, we cannot but think this the most effective, as it is certainly the most natural, mode of preaching, — very few, comparatively speaking, are prepared with the requisite degree of deliberation and care. Owing to the hasty manner in which they are *got up*, the subjects are rarely sufficiently digested; the several parts of the discourse do not present themselves to the mind with sufficient distinctness; and, what is as bad, the great task of selection is not adequately performed after the materials have been got together. Knowing that he must have a sufficient mass of matter of some kind or other, conscious that there is not much time to collect it, and grievously fearing lest he should not have enough, the preacher takes every thing that offers, relevant or irrelevant, simply because it cannot be dispensed with. The process too often adopted in the manufacture of these extemporaneous discourses, we take to be this. A text is selected; critics and commentators hastily consulted; and as it is felt that every thing must be used, all that is collected *about* the text, whether relevant or not, whether calculated to instruct and edify, or quite unlikely to do either the one or the other, goes into the notes, simply because it cannot be spared. It is owing to this that we have sometimes heard preachers occupy a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes, (exhausting the patience and dissipating the attention of their flocks,) in disposing of some whimsical, far-fetched, and palpably untrue interpretation of the text; benevolently assuring them, at the same time, that such interpretations are utterly worthless, never dreamt of except by the solitary author who originated them, and perfectly inconsistent with common sense!

There are not a few fallacies by which some preachers impose upon themselves the belief, that less preparation is necessary than is really indispensable. They think that the topics on which they have to insist are so familiar and obvious, that it is easy to discourse about them to any extent. It is clear that this argument *ought* to tell just the other way; it is precisely because the topics on which the Christian minister has to expatiate are so familiar and obvious, that the more diligence is requisite to set them in new lights; — to devise new modes of illustration, and to secure the requisite variety, by changing the form where we cannot change the substance. In this way only can exhausted attention be stimulated and renewed; but in this way it can. As the instances recently adduced will show, even the most obvious and threadbare truths may be made striking and forcible by a new setting.

Sometimes men will tell us that they prefer a *natural* and *artless* eloquence, and that very diligent preparation is inconsistent with such qualities. We verily believe that this fallacy, though it lurks under an almost transparent ambiguity, is of most prejudicial consequence. Nature and art, so far from being always opposed, are often the very same thing. Thus, to adduce a familiar example, and closely related to the present subject, it is *natural* for a man who feels that he has not given adequate expression to a thought, though he may have used the first words suggested, to attempt it again and again. He, each time, approximates nearer to the mark, and at length desists, satisfied either that he has done what he wishes, or that he cannot perfectly do it, as the case may be. A writer, with this end, is continually transposing clauses, reconstructing sentences, striking out one word and putting in another. All this may be said to be *art*, or the deliberate application of means to ends; but is it art inconsistent with nature? It is just such art as this that we ask of the preacher, and no other; simply that he shall take diligent heed to do what he has to do as well as he can. Let him depend upon it, that no such *art* as this will ever make him appear the less natural.

A similar fallacy lurks under the unmeaning praises which are often bestowed upon a *simple* style of address. We love a true simplicity as much as any of its eulogists can do; but we should probably differ about the meaning of the word. While some men talk as if to speak naturally were to speak like a natural, others talk as if to speak with simplicity meant to speak like a simpleton. True simplicity does not consist in what is trite, bald, or commonplace. So far as regards the thought, it means, not what is already obvious to every body, but what, though not obvious, is immediately recognized, as soon as propounded, to be true and striking. As it regards the expression, it means, that thoughts worth hearing are expressed in language that every one can understand. In the first point of view, it is opposed to what is abstruse; in the second, to what is obscure. It is not what some men take it to mean, threadbare, commonplace, expressed in insipid language. It can be owing only to a fallacy of this kind, that we so often hear discourses, consisting of little else than meagre truisms, expanded and diluted till every mortal ear aches that listens. We have heard preachers commence with the tritest of truths, — "all men are mortal," — and proceed to illustrate it with as much prolixity as though they were announcing it as a new proposition to a company of immortals in some distant planet, sceptical as to the reality of a fact so portentous, and so unauthenticated by their own experience.

True simplicity is the last and most excellent grace which can belong to a speaker, and is certainly not to be attained without much effort. Those who have attentively read the present article will not suspect us of demanding more deliberate preparation on the part of the preacher, that he may offer what is profound, recondite, or abstruse; but that he may say only what he ought to say, and that what he does say may be better said. When the topics are such only as ought to be insisted on, and the language such as is readily understood, the preacher may depend upon it that no pains he may take will be lost, — that his audience, however homely, will be sure to appreciate them, — and that the better a discourse is, the better they will like it.

We have stated as the other great cause of the failure of preachers, that they are not sufficiently instructed in the *principles* of pulpit eloquence. We are far from contending that a systematic exposition of the laws, in conformity with which all effective discourses to the people must be constructed, should be made a part of *general* education; or that it ought to be imparted even to him who is destined to be a public speaker till his general training, and that a very ample one, is far advanced. But that such knowledge shall be acquired by every one designed for such an office, and that all universities and colleges should furnish the means of communicating it, we have no manner of doubt. It is sometimes said, indeed, that all systematic instruction of this sort tends to spoil nature, prevent simplicity, and encourage vanity; — in short, that it is sure to produce one or other of the forms of spurious or artificial eloquence. We ask, Does the objector mean any such system as approves of such things, or one that condemns them? If the former, we know of no such system; if the latter, then he must defend the paradox, that such systems have, somehow or other, a tendency to produce the very faults which they expose and denounce, and to prevent the attainment of those very excellences which they describe as the only ones worth seeking! Now, is it possible for any sane mind to conceive that the ridicule which Campbell and Whately, for example, pour upon such faults, can foster in any youth a perverse passion for them? Or that the severity, simplicity, earnest business-like style, which these writers everywhere enjoin as essential to all effective eloquence, should provoke any man to the imitation of the opposite vices? The supposition is an absurdity. So far as such writers produce any effect at all, it must be to prevent the follies which they so unsparingly condemn. Those who attribute vicious eloquence to sound criticism, have been guilty merely of the common blunder of assigning effects to wrong causes; only it must be confessed that, in the present case, they show singular ingenuity in referring them to the only causes which could not by possibility produce them. The simple truth is, that the bent of the young mind is so strong towards various forms of this spurious eloquence, that it resists the most powerful counteraction; and time and experience alone will avail, and not always even these, to give precepts their due weight and their just practical influence. To charge such effects upon such causes, is about as wise as it would be to say of some spot which had been but partially cultivated, and from which the weeds which nature had so prodigally sown had not been completely eradicated : "This comes of gardening and artificial culture ! "

Youthful vanity and inexperience alone sufficiently account for the greater part of the deviations from propriety, simplicity, and common sense, now adverted to. Those who laud nature in opposition to art, are too apt to forget that this very vanity forms a part of it. It is natural for a youth, whether with or without cultivation, to fall into these errors ; and all experience loudly proclaims that, on such a point, nature alone is no safe guide. Who, that has arrived at maturity in intellect, taste, and feeling, does not recollect how hard it was in early life to put the extinguisher upon a flaunting metaphor or dazzling expression, — to reject tinsel, however worthless, if it did but glitter ; and epithets, however superfluous, if they but sounded grand ? How hard it was to forget one's self, and to become sincerely intent upon the best, simplest, strongest, briefest mode of communicating what we deemed important truth to the minds of others ! Surely, then, it is not a little ridiculous, when so obvious a solution offers itself, to charge the faults of young speakers upon the very precepts which condemn them. It is sufficient to vindicate the utility of such precepts, if they tend only in some measure to correct the errors they cannot entirely suppress, and to abridge the duration of follies which it is impossible wholly to prevent.

But it is further said, that, somehow or other, *any* such system of instruction does injury, by laying upon the intellect a sort of constraint, and substituting a stiff, mechanical movement for the flexibility and freedom of nature.

The reply is, that if the system of instruction be too minute, or if the pupil be told to employ it mechanically, it may easily be conceived that such effects will follow, but not otherwise. We plead for no system of minute technical rules ; still less for the formal application of any system whatever. But to imbue the mind with great general principles, leaving them to operate imperceptibly upon the formation of habit, and to suggest, without distinct consciousness of their presence, the lesson which each occasion demands, is a very different thing, and is all we contend for. One would think, to hear some men talk, that it was proposed to instruct a youth to adjust beforehand the number of sentences of which each paragraph should consist, and the *lengths* into which the sentences should be cut, — to determine how many should be perfect periods, and how many should not, — what average allowance of antitheses, interrogatives, and notes of admiration, shall be given to each page, — where he shall stick on a metonymy or a metaphor, and how many niches he shall reserve for gilded ornaments. Who is pleading for any such nonsense as this? All that is contended for is, that no public speaker should be destitute of a clear perception of those principles of man's nature on which conviction and persuasion depend; and of those proprieties of style which ought to characterize all discourses which are designed to effect these objects. General as all this knowledge must be, we cannot help thinking that it would be most advantageous. One great good it would undoubtedly in many cases effect; — it would prevent men from *setting out wrong*, or at least abridge the amount or duration of their errors; — in other words, prevent the formation of vicious habits, or tend to correct them when formed. Nothing is more common than for a speaker to set out with false notions as to the style which effective public speaking requires, — to suppose it something very remote from what is simple and natural. Still more are led into similar errors by their vanity. The young especially are apt to despise the true style for what are its chief excellences, — its simplicity and severity. Let them once be taught its great superiority to every other, and they will at least be protected from involuntary errors, and be less likely to yield to the seductions of vanity. Such a knowledge would also (perhaps the most important benefit of all) involve a knowledge of the best models, and secure timely appreciation of them.

But it is frequently urged, that, after all, the practical value of all the great lessons of criticism must be learned from experience, and that mere instruction can do little. Be it so. Is this any reason why that little should be withheld? Besides, is it nothing to put a youth in the right way? — to abridge the lessons of experience? — to facilitate the formation of good habits, and to prevent the growth of bad ones? — to diminish the probabilities of failure, and to increase those of success? Is there any reason why we should suffer the young speaker to grope out his way by the use of the lead-line alone, when we could give him the aid of the chart and compass; or to find his way to truth at last by a series of painful blunders, when any part of the trouble or the shame might be spared him? Can any one doubt that a great speaker may be able to give a novice in the art many profitable hints, which would save him both much time and many errors, and make the lessons of experience not only a great deal shorter, but vastly less troublesome? If this be so, we cannot see how it should be affirmed that instructions founded on an accurate analysis of eloquence, and compiled and digested by critics like Campbell and Whately, will altogether fail of producing similar benefits.

Lastly; it is urged that such instructions are of very little benefit, because, do what we will, we cannot *make* great speakers; that nature has the exclusive patent for the manufacture; that, like the true poet, the true orator is "born, not made," — facts which we fully admit, but deny to be relevant. The argument contains a twofold fallacy. First, it is not true that even those to whom nature has imparted this heaven-born genius, can do themselves full justice without assiduous cultivation, or afford to dispense with early instruction. Certain it is, that none of them have ever thought it wise to venture upon such a display of independence. Secondly, if it were ever so true that such men could do without instruction, the cases are so few, that they would in no wise affect the general question. The highest oratorical genius is of the very rarest occurrence, — it is as rare as the epic or dramatic, if not more so, — there being but two or three tolerably perfect specimens to be found in the whole cabinet of history. The great question is, how to improve to the utmost the talents of those who must be public speakers, but who yet have no pretensions to the inspiration of genius; — on whom, in truth, no one ever suspects that the mantle either of Demosthenes or of Cicero has descended. Nor should it ever be forgotten, (for it powerfully confirms the correctness of the views now insisted upon,) that, though the constitution of mind which is necessary for the highest eloquence is very seldom to be met with, there is no faculty whatever which admits of such indefinite growth and development, or in which perseverance and diligence will do so much, as that of public speaking.

THE VANITY AND GLORY OF LITERATURE.*

When a man has once resolved upon a subject, then, "for a text," says Sterne, "Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, is as good as any in the Bible." Without pretending to be so easily satisfied as that very accommodating divine, we shall choose, for our present text, the "London Catalogue"; nor shall we be without grave precedents, both in his discourses and in those of much better theologians, if we should ultimately allow the text to play but an insignificant part in the sermon.

Our readers will readily surmise that it is not our intention to criticize this curious volume, or to trouble them with any specimens of its contents. But though we have little to say of it, it has a great deal to say to us; and, in truth, there are few productions of the press more suggestive of instructive and profitable reflection. Still, as it only conveys wisdom in broken and stammering accents, we must endeavor, according to our ability, to give clearer utterance to some of the lessons it teaches.

This closely printed book contains 542 pages; and, after all, comprises a catalogue of but a small fraction of the literature of the time; in fact, only the titles of the new works, and new editions of old works, which have issued from the British press between the years 1814 and 1846; and not all of these. To this prodigious mass each day is adding fresh accumulations; and it is impossible not to speculate a little on the probable consequences.

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* "Edinburgh Review," April, 1849.

The London Catalogue of Books published in Great Britain, with their Sizes, Prices, and Publishers' Names, from 1814 *to* 1846. London. 8vo. pp. 542.

Some may perhaps, at first, be inclined to predict that mankind will in time be oppressed by the excess of their intellectual wealth; and that, operating like the gold of Villa Rica, (to which it would seem that we might soon have to add that of California,) the superabundance of the precious metal may lead to the impoverishment and ruin of the countries so equivocally blest. It may be feared that a superficial and flimsy knowledge, gained by reading a very little on an infinity of subjects, without prolonged and systematic attention to any, will be the ultimate result; and such knowledge, it can hardly be disputed, will be in effect much the same as ignorance. Singular, if the very means by which we take security against a second invasion of barbarism, should, by its excess of activity, bring about a condition not very much better! "A mill will not go," such reasoners will say, "if there be no water; but it will be as effectually stopped if there be too much." In brief, it may seem to be one of those cases, if ever there was one, in which old Hesiod's paradoxical maxim applies, that "the half is more than the whole"; or, for that matter, a much smaller fraction.

And this dreaded result would certainly be realized, if men were to attempt to make their studies at all commensurate with the increase of books. Compelled to read something of every thing, it is certain they would know nothing of any thing. In fact, we see this tendency more or less exemplified in the case of vast numbers, who, without definite purpose or selection of topics, spend such time as they can give to the improvement of their minds and the acquisition of knowledge, in little else than the casual perusal of fragments of all sorts of books; who live on the scraps of an infinite variety of broken meats which they have stuffed into their beggar's wallet; scraps which, after all, only just keep them from absolute starvation. There are not a few men who would have been learned, if not wise, had the paragraphs and pages they have actually read, been on well-defined subjects, and mutually connected; but who, as it is, possess nothing beyond fragments of uncertain, inaccurate, ill-remembered, unsystematized information, and at the best are entitled only to the praise of being very artificially and elaborately ignorant; they differ from the utterly uncultivated, only as a parrot who talks without understanding what it says, differs from a parrot who cannot talk at all.

But this tendency, though it must attend the unlimited increase of books, and though we see it often most unhappily realized in individual cases, is, for the most part, readily corrected. The majority of men will, as heretofore, only read what answers their purpose on the particular subjects which necessity or inclination prompts them to cultivate; while many of those who are not thus protected by circumstances, will be as effectually secured from such dangers by a sound education. *That* must be our safeguard against the formation of the pernicious habit of desultory reading; — and against an ambitious, but ill-judged attempt at obtaining encyclopedic knowledge. This last ambition, indeed, is but a more laborious path to the same conclusion; and robs the mind at once both of that mental discipline which will always follow the thorough investigation of a limited class of subjects, and of that really accurate knowledge which such a limited survey alone can ever securely impart. The field of knowledge does not admit of universal conquerors; according to the happy saying of Sydney Smith, if science is their *forte*, omniscience is their foible.

At all events, one thing is clear: to guard against this danger will demand, as time rolls on, an increasing attention to the prime object of all education, — the formation of sound *habits* of mind, — the *discipline* of the faculties, — a thing of infinitely more consequence than the mere variety of the information attained. There will also be required efforts, more and more strenuous, to digest and systematize, from time to time, the ever-growing accumulations of literature; and to provide the best possible clews through this immense and bewildering labyrinth, or rather through the several parts of it; for who can thread the whole?

Nor are the best *modes* of pursuing study unworthy of attention. Indeed, a very useful book (if we could get a Leibnitz or a Gibbon to compose it) might be written on the "art of reading books" in the most profitable manner. If students had patience for it, we are convinced that a much deeper and better compacted knowledge (though the progress might be slower) would be obtained by a more thorough adherence to the maxim so warmly approved by the great historian just mentioned, "multum legere, potius quam multa," and by a constant habit of examining the scope and context of the authors referred to on any important points. The knowledge thus acquired, partly from the trouble it gives, partly from the many associations suggested by the collation of different writers, and the comparison of different styles and modes of thought, nay, even by the different forms and type of the books themselves, seldom fails to be firmly impressed on the memory. These collateral aids are like reflectors, which increase indefinitely the intensity of light, and render a subject luminous which would otherwise be obscure. How instructive are these words of Gibbon, — himself a conspicuous example of what even a postdiluvian life industriously employed may accomplish: "We ought to attend not so much to the order of our books, as of our thoughts. The perusal of a particular work gives birth perhaps to ideas unconnected with the subject it treats; I pursue these ideas, and quit my proposed plan of reading."* . . . . . "I suspended my perusal of any new books on a subject, till I had reviewed all that I knew, or believed, or had thought on it, that I might be qualified to discern how much the authors added to my original stock." *

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* Extraits Raisonnées de mes Lectures. He adds: "Si j'avois suivi mon grand chemin, au bout de ma longue carrière, j'aurois à peine pu retrouver les traces de mes idées."

Perpetual access to a large library, it may be suspected, is often an impediment to a thorough digestion of knowledge, by tempting to an unwise indulgence. There is a story of a man who said he always read borrowed books with double attention as well as profit, because he could not hope to renew his acquaintance with them at pleasure! This of course presupposes that he *returned* the books he borrowed, — an event which, we fear, does not always happen.

It is probable, indeed, that a comparatively small number of well-selected books, — even when our own, — would, generally, be likely to form a sounder and more serviceable knowledge than the unlimited range of a large library. Most readers must have been conscious of the fastidious mood with which, in moments of leisure, they have stood before a goodly assortment of attractive writers, and instead of making a substantial repast, as they would have done with less to distract their choice, have humored the vagaries of a delicate appetite, — toyed with this rich dainty and that, — and after all have felt like a schoolboy who has dined upon tarts; — that they have spoiled their digestion without satisfying their hunger!

But without stopping any longer to examine this paradox, — whether the multiplication of books is to produce a diminution of knowledge or not, — there are other consequences of the prodigious activity of the modern press far more certain to arise, and which well deserve a little consideration.

One of the most obvious of these consequences will be the disappearance from the world of that always rare animal, the *so-called* "universal scholar." Even of that ill-defined crea-

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* Memoirs; — and thought worthy of being *twice* cited by Mr. D'Israeli.

ture called "a well-informed man" and "general student," it will be perpetually harder to find exemplars; but assuredly the Huets, the Scaligers, the Leibnitzes must become as extinct as the ichthyosaurus or the megatherium. It is true that, in the strict sense of the word, such a creature as "the universal scholar" does not, and never did, exist. But there as certainly have been men who had traversed a sufficiently large segment of the entire circumference of existing science and literature, to render the name something more than a ridiculous hyperbole. It is commonly, indeed, and truly, said to be impossible for the human mind to prosecute researches with accuracy in all, or even many different branches of knowledge; that what is gained in surface is lost in depth; that the principle of the "division of labor" strictly applies here as in arts and manufactures, and that each mind must restrict itself to a very few limited subjects, if any are to be really mastered. All this is most true. Yet it is equally true, that, in the pursuit of knowledge, the principle of the "division of labor" finds limits to its application much sooner than in handicrafts. The voracious "helluo librorum" is not more to be suspected of ill-digested and superficial knowledge, than he whom the proverb tells us to avoid (though for a very different, and, as we suspect, less valid reason), the man "unius libri."* A certain *amount* of knowledge of several subjects, often of many, is necessary to render the knowledge of any one of these serviceable; and, without it, the most minute knowledge of any one alone would be like half a pair of scissors, or a hand with but one finger. *What* is that amount must be determined by the circumstances of the individual, and the object for which he wants it; the safe maximum will vary in different cases.

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* For what can be suggested in favor of the "Man of One Book," the reader may profitably consult the observations of Mr. D'Israeli on that subject in his "Curiosities of Literature." There is truth in what he says; but if the proverb is to be taken at all *literally*, we are convinced that it has less than the usual average of proverbial wisdom, and that the "man of one book" will prove but a shallow fellow.

There are opposite dangers. The knowledge of each particular thing that a man can study will always be imperfect. The most "minute philosopher" cannot pretend perfection of knowledge even in his little domain; and if it were perfect to-day, the leakage of memory would make it imperfect by to-morrow. No subject can be named, which is not inexhaustible to the spirit of man. Whether he looks at nature through the microscope or the telescope, he sees wonders disclosed on either side which extend into infinity, — the infinitely great or the infinitely little, — and can set no limits to the approximate perfection with which he may study them. It is the same also with languages and with any branch of moral or metaphysical science. A man may, if he will, be all his life long employed upon a single language, and never *absolutely* master its vocabulary, much less its idioms; like the ancient, after many years of solitary application, he may unconsciously proclaim himself a foreigner to the first apple-woman he meets, by some solecism too subtle for any but a native ear to detect it.

The limits, then, within which any subject is to be pursued must be determined by utility; meantime, it is certain that one cannot be profitably pursued alone. Such, it has been well observed, is the strict connection and interdependence of all branches of science, that the best way of obtaining a useful knowledge of one is to combine it with more. The true limit between too minute and too wide a survey may be often difficult to find; nevertheless, such a limit always exists; and he who should pause over any one subject, however minute, till he had absolutely mastered it, would be as far from that limit with regard to all the practical ends of knowledge, as if he had suffered his mind to dissipate itself in a vague attempt at encyclopedic attainments. The statement of Maclaurin on this point, expressed in a characteristically mathematical form, is well worthy of attention. "Our knowledge," says he, "is vastly greater than the sum of what all its objects separately could afford; and when a new object comes within our reach, the addition to our knowledge is the greater, the more we already know; so that it increases, not as the new objects increase, but in a much higher proportion.*

At all events, it ill becomes us to speak disparagingly of the various, and, for all practical purposes, solid, attainments of superior intellects. There is a piece of self-flattery by which little minds often try to reduce great minds to their own level. "True," it is said, "such men have very various knowledge, but it is all superficial; they have not surrendered themselves to any one branch sufficiently"; and all this, perhaps, because they have not cultivated with the most elaborate industry every little corner of it, and because they have had some conception of the relative value of the *parts* of a large subject! The minute antiquary (if he be nothing more) talks in this style if he finds you ignorant of the shape of an old buckle of such a date!—"You know nothing of antiquities." The minute geographer, if he discovers that you have never heard of some obscure town at the antipodes, will tell you, you know nothing of geography. The minute historian, if he finds that you never knew, or perhaps have known twenty times, and never cared to remember, some event utterly insignificant to all real or imaginable purposes of history, will tell you that you know nothing of history. And yet, discerning the limits within which the several branches of knowledge should be pursued, you may, after all, for every important object, have attained a more serviceable and prompt command over those very branches in which your complacent censor flatters himself that he excels.

But to return to the prospects of the so-called "universal scholar." There have been in every age men who, gifted with gigantic powers, prodigious memory, and peculiar modes of arranging and retaining knowledge, have aspired to a comprehensive acquaintance with all the chief productions of the human intellect in all time; who have made extensive incur-

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* Maclaurin's Account of Newton's Discoveries, p. 392.

sions into every branch of human learning; and whose knowledge has borne something like an appreciable ratio to the sum total of literature and science; who, as Fontenelle expressively says of Leibnitz, have managed "to drive all the sciences abreast." Such minds have always been rare; but, as we just now observed, they must soon become extinct. For what is to become of them in after ages, as the domain of human knowledge indefinitely widens, and the creations of human genius indefinitely multiply? Not that there will not be men who will then know *absolutely* more, and with far greater accuracy, than their less favored predecessors; nevertheless, their knowledge must bear a continually diminishing ratio to the sum of human science and literature; they must traverse a smaller and smaller segment of the ever-dilating circle! * Nay, it may well be, that the accumulations of even one science (chemistry or astronomy for instance) may be too vast for one brief life to master. Or, since that thought is really too immense to be other than vague, let us confine ourselves to some very slender additions to the task of the future "universal scholar," imposed during the last few years. Let us think only of some *few* of those voluminous authors who have appeared, in our own country *alone*, and in the single department of history and polite letters, within the last century, or even within two generations, and with whom not only all who pretend to profound scholarship, but all "well-informed men," are presumed to have some acquaintance; — to say nothing of living writers and the vast mass of excellent literature which they are every year pouring into the world. Let us think only of the voluminous remains of Johnson, Burke, Gibbon, Hume, Robertson, Goldsmith, Cowper, Crabbe, Byron, Walter Scott (with his hundred volumes), and some scores of other great names. Now as human life, it has been justly said, remains brief as ever, while the task of the student is daily enlarging, there is no alternative but that the "general scholar" of each succeeding age must be content with possessing a less and less fraction of the entire products of the human mind. "Happy men," we are half inclined ungratefully to say, "who lived when a library consisted, like that of a mediæval monastery, of some thirty or forty volumes, and who thought they knew every thing when they had read these! Happy our fathers, who were not tormented with the sight of unnumbered creations of genius, which we must sigh to think we can never make our own!"

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* "In Germany alone," says Menzel, "according to a moderate calculation, ten millions (?) of volumes are annually printed. As the catalogue of every Leipzig half-yearly book contains the names of more than a thousand German authors, we may compute that at the present moment there are living in Germany about fifty thousand men who have written one or more books. Should that number increase at the same rate that it has hitherto done, the time will soon come when a catalogue of ancient and modern German authors will contain more names than there are living readers. . . . . . In the year 1816 there were published for the first time more than three thousand books; in 1822, for the first time, above four thousand; in 1827, for the first time, above five thousand; and in 1832, for the first time, above six thousand; the numbers thus increasing one thousand every five years." — Gordon's *Translation of Menzel's German Literature.* The translator adds, from the "Conversations-Lexicon," the numbers published annually to 1837, in which year they were nearly eight thousand. The literary activity of France and England, though not so great, has been prodigious.

The final disposal of all this mass of literature is with some easily managed. The bad will perish, it is said, and the good remain. The former statement is true enough; the latter not so clear. "Bad books," says Menzel, "have their season just as vermin have. They come in swarms, and perish before we are aware. . . . . . How many thousand books have gone the way of all paper, or are now mouldering in our libraries? Many of *our* books, however, will not last even so long, for the paper itself is as bad as its contents." All this may be true; but we cannot disguise from ourselves, that not the bad writer alone is forgotten. It is but too evident that immense treasures of thought, — of beautiful poetry, vivacious wit, ingenious argument, — which men would not suffer to die if they could help it, must perish too; the great spoiler here acts with his accustomed impartiality, —

> "Æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
> Regumque turres."

For the truth is, that the creations of the human mind transcend its capacity to collect and preserve them; like the seeds of life in the vegetable world, the intellectual powers of man are so prolific that they run to waste. Some readers, perhaps, as a bright company of splendid names rushes on their recollection, may be disposed to say "Avaunt!" to these melancholy forebodings. Surely, it can be only necessary to remind them of the votive tablets in the Temple of Neptune recording escape from shipwreck. How many men have suffered shipwreck, and whose tablets, therefore, are not to be found! Others may think it impossible that great writers, with whom their own generation has been so familiar, and who occupy such a space in its eye, can ever dwindle into insignificance. The illusion vanishes the moment we take them to catalogues and indexes, and show them names of authors who once made as loud a noise in the world, of whom they never read a line. We should be too happy to believe the statement of Menzel correct: "Of three good authors, one at least will be remembered by posterity; while of a hundred bad ones, who are distinguished at present, not above one will hand down his evil example." *

It is with no cynical, but with simply mournful feelings, that we thus dwell on the mortality of the productions even of genius. We would be just, both to the living and the dead, by admitting that thousands of the latter who are for-

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* "Die Gegenwart duldet keinen Richter, aber die Vergangenheit findet immer den gerechtesten." — Menzel, Th. I. s. 95. But our author forgets that it is possible for the courts of criticism, like those of law, to be overdone with business; that the list may contain more causes than industry and skill can get through, *except* by a process which leaves justice out of the question, and dares to decide without a hearing.

gotten, deserved to be remembered, and that the former would remember them if they could. Most pleasant it would be, no doubt, in case human life were prolonged in some proportion with the augmented sum of human knowledge, to lay out our studies on a corresponding scale. Possessed of antediluvian longevity, we might devote some twenty years or so (a year or two more or less would be of no consequence) to purely elementary studies and discipline; the "promising lad" of fifty might commence his more serious school studies, under judicious masters, in their full vigor and prime of three or four centuries; and at the age of ninety or a hundred, the young student, just entering upon life (though as yet raw and inexperienced), might be supposed to have laid a tolerably solid foundation, whereon, in the course of his progress towards manhood through the next two centuries, he might, by due diligence and perseverance, build such a superstructure as should justify some pretensions to accurate and sound scholarship. But, alas! we forget that, even then, the old obstructions to universal knowledge would soon be reproduced in a new form. The same insatiable curiosity and the same restless activity, operating through longer periods, would rapidly extend the circle of science and literature beyond the reach of even such a student. The tremendous authors who enjoyed a career of five centuries of popularity, would be voluminous in proportion; Jeremy Taylor and Baxter, Voltaire and Walter Scott, would appear but pamphleteers in comparison. Their "opera omnia" would extend to libraries. Novels would be written to which the Great Cyrus and Clelia would be mere *novellettes;* wherein the heroes and heroines would be married, hanged, or drowned, after a courtship and adventures of two or three centuries. The biographies of the long-lived worthies of such an age would be composed in forty folios, or more; and the history of nations projected on a scale which would render De Thou's huge seven tomes a mere sketch or abstract. The author who began the history of Athens by a dissertation on the geological formation of the Acropolis, or the work of Leibnitz on the House of Brunswick, in which he commences with his "Protogæa," would be but a type of the prodigious gyrations of such writers; so that the hopeless student, "toiling after them in vain," would be obliged to exclaim, with Voltaire's "little man of Saturn," who *only* lived during five hundred revolutions (or fifteen thousand of our years), that scarcely had he begun to pick up a little knowledge, when he was summoned to depart; and that to live only for such a span is, as one may say, to die as soon as one is born.

But let us not be dismayed. The difference in the position of the "general scholar" of earlier, as compared with one of later times, is not so vast as might at first be imagined. Even the former, with all his advantages, had far more books before him than he could digest. We have but to look at the index of their collected works, and to mark the limited class of authors with whom they were familiar, to be convinced that each, after all, had travelled over but a small portion of the entire ground. We have stated, that of the literature which chiefly occupies each generation, the bulk, even of its treasures, perishes; and as time makes fresh accumulations, those of preceding ages pass for the most part into quiet oblivion. The process which has taken effect on the past will be repeated on the present age and on every subsequent one; so that the period will assuredly come, when even the great writers of our days, who seem to have such enduring claims upon our gratitude and admiration, will be as little remembered as others of equal genius who have gone before them; when, if not wholly forgotten or superseded, they will exist only in fragments or specimens, — these fragments and specimens themselves shrinking into narrower compass as time advances. In this way Time is perpetually compiling a vast *index expurgatorius;* and though the press more than repairs his ravages on the mere *matter* of books, the immense masses he heaps up insure the purpose of oblivion just as effectually. Not that his contemporary waste has ceased, or become very moderate. Probably scarcely a day now passes but sees the last leaf, the last tattered remnant of the last copy of some work (great or small) of some author or other perish by violence or accident, — by fire, flood, or the crumbling of mere decay. It is surely an impressive thought, — this silent, unnoticed extinction of another product of some once busy and aspiring mind !

Paradoxical as it may seem, the chief cause of the virtual oblivion of books is no longer their extinction, but the fond care with which they are preserved, and their immensely rapid multiplication. The press is more than a match for the moth and the worm, or the mouldering hand of time ; yet the great destroyer equally fulfils his commission, by burying books under the pyramid which is formed by their accumulation. It is a striking example of the impotence with which man struggles against the destiny which awaits him and his works, that the very means he takes to insure immortality, destroy it ; that the very activity of the press, of the instrument by which he seemed to have taken pledges against time and fortune, is that which will make him the spoil of both. The books themselves may no longer die ; but their spirit does : and they become like old men whose bodies have outlived their minds, — a spectacle more piteous than death itself. It is really curious to look into the index of such learned writers as Jeremy Taylor, Cudworth, or Leibnitz, and to see the havoc which has been made on the memory of the greater part of the writers they cite, and who still exist, though no longer to be cited ; of men who were *their* great contemporaries or immediate predecessors, and who are quoted by them just as Locke or Burke is quoted by us. Of scarcely one in ten of these grave authorities has the best-informed student of our day read ten pages. The very names of vast numbers have all but perished ; at all events, have died out of familiar remembrance. Let the student who flatters himself that he is not ill-informed, glance over the index of even such a work as Hallam's "History of European Literature," — designed only to record the more memorable names, — and ask himself of how many of the authors there mentioned he has read so much as even five pages? It will be enough to chastise all ordinary conceit of extensive attainments, and, perhaps as effectually as any thing, teach a man that truest kind of knowledge, — the knowledge of his own ignorance.

But while thus administering consolation to the "general scholar," by showing that time has been certainly limiting as well as extending his task, there is another class who will find no consolation in the thought, — and that is the class of authors. There is no help, however: humbling as it may seem, to represent the noble products of man's mind as destined to decay, like his body, — and the thoughts and interests which he knows must perish with it, — it is the truth, nevertheless, in the vast majority of instances. And in by far the greater number of the seeming instances to the contrary, authors still do not *live;* they are merely embalmed, and made mummies of. The works of the great mass of extant authors are deposited in libraries and museums, like the bodies of Egyptian kings in their pyramids, — retaining only a grim semblance of life, amidst neglect, darkness, and decay.

To Mr. D'Israeli's enthusiastic gaze, the sight of the rows of goodly volumes in their rich bindings, gleaming behind the glittering trellis-work of their carved cases, suggested the idea of "Eastern beauties peering through their *jalousies*"! To the eye of a severe philosopher, they might more naturally suggest the idea of the aforesaid mummies.

It has been often affirmed, — and there is *some* truth in it, — that, of all the forms of celebrity which promise to gratify man's natural longing for immortality, there is none which looks so plausible as that of literary glory. The great statesman and warrior, it is said, are known only by report, and for even *that* are indebted to the poet and historian. Sir

Walter Scott (a man by no means disposed to over-estimate the importance of a literary as compared with a practical life), after looking at certain drawings of some splendid architectural monuments of ancient India, the names of whose founders have perished, justly remarks in his diary, "Fame depends on literature, not on architecture." But even where a Pindar or a Tacitus undertakes the task of celebrating munificence or greatness, we are compelled to feel, that, after all, it is but the conqueror's or statesman's *portrait*, rather than the conqueror or statesman himself, that is presented to us. On the other hand, a book is fondly presumed to be an author's second self; by it he comes as it were into contact, into personal communion, with the minds of his readers. It is a pleasant illusion, no doubt; and in the very *few* instances in which the author *does* attain this permanent popularity, and becomes a "household word" with posterity, the illusion ceases to be such, and the hopes of ambition are indeed splendidly realized. But it is not only most true that very few can attain this eminence; it has not been sufficiently observed, that, as the world grows older, a still smaller and smaller portion of those who *seem* to have attained it will retain their position. A minute fraction of even these will be consigned to the future, and fractions even of these fractions will gradually drop away in the long march of time. The great mass of the writers whom "posterity would not willingly let die," if there were possibility of escape, must share the fate of those other great men over whom the author is supposed to have an advantage; they themselves will live only by the historian's pen. The empty titles of their books will be recorded in catalogues; and a few lines be granted to them in biographical dictionaries, — with what may be truly called a *post mortem* examination of criticism; a space which, as those churchyards of intellect become more and more crowded, will necessarily also become smaller and smaller, till, for thousands, not even room for a sepulchral stone will be found.

Nor is it easy to say how far this oblivion will go, or what luminaries will be in time eclipsed. Supposing only a scantling of the products of the genius of each age — its richest and ripest fruits — handed down to posterity, (and there is already gathered into the garner far more than any one man has read or can read,) the accumulation of these scantlings will gradually rise into a prodigious pile. The time must come, when not only mediocrity, which has been always the case, not only excellence, which has been long the case, will stand a chance of being rejected, but when even gold and diamonds will be cast into the sieve! Hardy must those be who shall then venture to hope for the *permanent* attention of mankind! for it will be found that the greater part of authors have bought, not, as they fondly imagined, a copyhold of inheritance. Their interest for life or years soon runs out, and every year rapidly diminishes the value of the estate.

We already see this mournfully realized in relation to a thousand bright names of the last two centuries. How much beautiful poetry, scarcely second in merit to any, is all but forgotten in the crowd, and reduced to a single fragment or two in some book of specimens or "elegant extracts"; hardly more than sufficient to serve for an epitaph! A future, however, is approaching, when even volumes of specimens (to be complete) must be in folios, and the very abstracts of excellence voluminous; or rather, when, if men would read only one page of each great genius, they must be content to construct a *spicilegium* something like that of the desultory student mentioned by Steele in one of the Guardians; who had such an inordinate habit of skipping from book to book, that, to gratify this taste, he fabricated a volume in which each page was from a different author, torn out at random, and bound up together.

With the exception, then, of the very few who shine on from age to age, like lights in the firmament, with undiminished lustre, — the Homers, the Shakspeares, the Miltons, the

Bacons, enshrined, like the heroes of old, among the constellations, — the great bulk of writers must be contented, after having shone for a while, to be wholly or nearly lost to the world. Entering our system like comets which move in hyperbolic orbits, they may strike their immediate generation with a sudden splendor; but receding gradually into the depths of space, they will twinkle with a fainter and a fainter lustre, till they fade away for ever.

Not the least instructive of the essays of Lord Jeffrey, reprinted from the "Edinburgh Review," is that suggested by Campbell's "Specimens of the British Poets." After remarking that many authors of no trivial popularity in their day, occupy the smallest possible amount of space in such a collection, he proceeds most strikingly, but sadly, to predict the possible condition of famous contemporaries a century hence. "Of near two hundred and fifty authors whose works are cited in these volumes, by far the greater part of whom were celebrated in their generation, there are not thirty who now enjoy any thing that can be called popularity, — whose works are to be found in the hands of ordinary readers, — in the shops of ordinary booksellers, — or in the press for republication. About fifty more may be tolerably familiar to men of taste or literature: the rest slumber on the shelves of collectors, and are partially known to a few antiquarians and scholars." . . . . . "The last ten years have produced, we think, an annual supply of about ten thousand lines of good staple poetry, — poetry from the very first hands that we can boast of, — that runs quickly to three or four large editions, and is as likely to be permanent as present success can make it. Now, if this goes on for a hundred years longer, what a task will await the poetical readers of 1919! . . . . . Then, — if the future editor have any thing like the indulgence and veneration for antiquity of his predecessors, — then shall posterity hang with rapture on the half of Campbell, and the fourth part of Byron, and the sixth of Scott, and the scattered tithes of Crabbe, and the three per cents of Southey, — while some good-natured critic shall sit in our mouldering chair, and more than half prefer them to those by whom they have been superseded!" Thus does the fame which looks most like immortality, resemble every other form of that painted shadow; in most instances it dwindles into a name; and that name not always legible. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity!" *

In one point we can hardly concur with Lord Jeffrey. He seems to think that the lot of the poet, in relation to fame, is yet more infelicitous than that of the man of science. He says: "The fame of a poet is popular or nothing. He does not address himself, like the man of science, to the learned, or those who desire to learn, but to all mankind; and his purpose being to delight and be praised, necessarily extends to all who can receive pleasure or join in applause." Now we think it certain, that if the poet and the man of science are relatively of equal merit, the chances of being remembered are far more favorable to the former than to the latter. As we had occasion to remark some time back, in a case of no less a genius than Leibnitz: "The condition of great philosophers is far less enviable than that of great poets. The former can never possess so large a circle of readers under any circumstances; but that number is still further abridged by the fact, that even the truths the philosopher has taught or discovered form but stepping-stones in the progress of science, and are afterwards digested, systematized, and better expounded in other works composed by inferior men. The

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* After penning the above words, we were reminded of another of the maxims of the same inspired writer, that there is "nothing new under the sun"; for, in turning over old Morhof's "Polyhistor" for another purpose, we stumbled on the following sentence: — "Scribendorum librorum nullum esse finem jam tum sapientissimus Salomon dicebat; ac est revera res infinita; ut enim cogitationibus hominum nullus statui finis potest, ita nec libris, qui cogitationum partus sunt; *quibus lectores tandem deerunt!* redeuntibus semper novis qui ad temporis sui genium accommodatiores sunt, et antiquorum luminibus officiunt."

creations of poetry, on the contrary, remain ever beautiful, as long as the language in which they are embodied shall endure: even to translate is to injure them. Thus it is, that for one reader of Archimedes (even amongst those who know just what Archimedes achieved) there are thousands of readers of Homer; and of Newton it may be truly said, that nine tenths of those who are familiar with his doctrines have never studied him, except at second hand. Far more intimate, no doubt, is that sympathy which Shakspeare and Milton inspire; 'being dead they yet speak,' and may even be said to form a part of the very minds of their readers." If comparative neglect be the lot of the writings even of Newton, what must be naturally and universally the fate of inferior men? Of that treatise of Descartes, in which he lays the foundation of analytical geometry, how few of those who have pursued that science to heights and depths of which Descartes never dreamed, ever perused a syllable! The case of the cultivators of chemistry, and of many other modern sciences, is still more desperate. A few years obliterate all traces of their works; the fortune of which it is, to become antiquated while their authors yet survive, — virtually obsolete while the type is still fresh and the dâte recent. Their names will soon be known only in the page of the historian of science, who will duly record in a few brief lines the discoveries their authors made, and the still greater blunders they committed; will tell us that they were strenuous men in their day, and for their day did well; and that they are now gathered to their fathers! — Such is often the *caput mortuum* of a life of experiments!

In that deluge of books with which the world is inundated, the lamentations with which the bibliomaniac bemoans the waste of time and the barbarous ravages of bigotry and ignorance, appear at first sight somewhat fantastical. Yet it is not without reason that we mourn over many of those losses, especially in reference to history; and this, not merely as they have involved in obscurity some important truths, but for a reason more nearly related to our present subject, and which has seldom suggested itself. Paradoxical as it may seem, it may probably be said with truth, that the very multiplicity of books with which we are now perplexed is in part owing to the loss of some; and that if we had had a few volumes more, we should probably have had many less. The countless multitudes of speculations, conjectures, and criticisms on those ample fields of doubt, which the ravages of time have left open to interminable discussion, would then have been spared to us. An "hiatus valde deflendus" too often leads to conjectures still more "lamentable"; and a moderate "lacuna" becomes the text of an immoderate disquisition.

On the other hand, it is doubtful whether — except in the case of history — the treasures of literature, of which time has deprived us, and the loss of which literary enthusiasts so bitterly regret, have been so inestimable. We are disposed to think with Gibbon, in his remarks on the burning of the Alexandrian Library, that by far the greater part of the masterpieces of antiquity have been secured to us; and that, though some few have assuredly been lost, there is no reason to believe that they have been numerous. The lost works, even of the greatest masters, were most probably inferior to those which have come down to us. Their best must have been those most admired, most frequently copied, most faithfully preserved; and therefore, on all these accounts, the most likely to elude the hand of violence and the casualties of time. "I sincerely regret," says the historian, "the more valuable libraries which have been involved in the ruin of the Roman empire: but when I seriously compute the lapse of ages, the waste of ignorance, and the calamities of war, our treasures rather than our losses are the object of my surprise. . . . . . We should gratefully remember, that the mischances of time and accident have spared the classic works to which the suffrage of antiquity had adjudged the first place of genius and glory; the teachers of ancient knowledge who are still extant, had perused and compared the writings of their predecessors; nor can it fairly be presumed that any important truth, any useful discovery in art or nature, has been snatched away from the curiosity of modern ages."

We have but to glance at our own great writers, to see how wide is the interval between their best and their worst productions. Is there one, at all voluminous, of whom it can be said, that all he has left is worthy of being transmitted to posterity? It is true, indeed, that, once possessed of any thing of theirs, we are naturally reluctant to lose it; and should even consider it a species of sacrilege to destroy it. Yet, in effect, very much they have left is as if it were lost, — for it is never read. As in other cases, we neglect what we have, and pine for what we have not, though if we had it we could not use it. Are there, of the thousands most familiar with their *chief* writings, fifty who have read *all* Bacon, *all* Milton, *all* Locke?

We therefore acquiesce in the judgment of Gibbon, not only as the best consolation under our inevitable losses, but as in all probability the true estimate of it; not, however, intending thereby any apology for the acts which reduce us to this exercise of faith: neither does Gibbon. On the contrary, as Mr. D'Israeli says, "he pathetically describes the empty library of Alexandria after the Christians had destroyed it"; though he does not in that place suggest any of the alleviations to which we have just adverted; he reserves them for the time when he has to describe the second and greater desolation on the same spot by the Mahometans! On this last occasion, he softens somewhat of his pathos, perhaps of his indignation, and makes the philosophic estimate which we have cited. Without abating *any* of the indignation and contempt due to such fanatical ignorance, *whether* Christian or Mahometan, it is impossible, we think, to deny the sound sense and discrimination of the great historian's observations.*

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* "I believe that a philosopher," says Mr. D'Israeli, "would consent to lose *any* poet to regain an historian." Perhaps so; if the exchange

Large as may be the waste of time, and still larger the virtual extinction of books by a silent process of oblivion,

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were always between a Claudian and a Tacitus. But the latter must be great indeed, to outweigh a Homer, a Shakspeare, or a Milton. "Fancy may be supplied," he remarks, "but truth once lost in the annals of mankind, leaves a chasm never to be filled." We fear that the fancy of the highest poetry is not quite so promptly made to order; while, on the other hand, Niebuhr has pretty clearly shown that history is far from being always truth; not to mention that, if it were so, the highest creations of poetry — those of a Homer or a Shakspeare — embody truth yet more comprehensive and universal than any consigned to the page of history. Montaigne remarks in one of his essays, that the value of history does not consist in the facts it records, but in the instruction the facts are capable of conveying; and this is so true, that the parts of history which are positively fabulous are often more full of significance, and have really had more influence, than the most accurate recital of the bare facts. Plutarch, with all his credulity and love of fable, has, we suspect, really exerted more power over the minds of men than any of the more authentic historians of antiquity. The graphic account which Livy has left of the discordant counsels given to the Samnites by Herennius Pontius respecting the disposal of the Romans taken at the pass of Caudium, has, perhaps, about as much historic truth in it as any other of the "thousand and one" legends which his historic Muse (rightly so called) has seized and adorned; but the whole is infinitely more instructive and more impressive than any narrative of the negotiations for a surrender of prisoners of war, with which tame history has supplied us. That the fox spoke to the crane what is attributed to him in the fable, is very doubtful; and that some "nobody" killed some other "nobody" may be very certain; but the fable, in the one case, is full of meaning, and the fact of history may be wholly insignificant. In our own age, honorably distinguished as one of severe historic research, and which has produced more than one historic work, and one very recently, which posterity will reckon among its treasures, it is well that historians, while accurately distinguishing truth from fable, should neither forget the beauties nor the uses of the latter; nor, on the other hand, overwhelm us with tediously minute investigations of insignificant facts, which no one cares for, and as to which it does not matter whether they happened in this way or that, or not at all. In the department of history there is no more frequent cause of that plethora of books under which the world is groaning. Walter Scott's remarks on his own Life of Napoleon are true in their principle, whatever we may think of the application of them: — "Superficial it must be, but I do not care for the charge. Beteach generation far more than makes up the loss; and though suffering from a glut, the world goes on adding to their number, as if in fear of an intellectual famine. One might imagine that in some departments of literature there would necessarily come a pause; for instance, considering there is already more of first-rate poetry and fiction than any body can pretend to find time to read, that none would be found to venture into these fields, unless persuaded that he had something to offer better than Homer, Shakspeare, or Scott! Equally prolific is the literature of memoirs and biography. There is a little better reason for this; yet the rage for it, it must be confessed, is often carried to a ludicrous extent. No sooner does any man of mark or likelihood die, than, in addition to his life, whole volumes of his letters and journals are thrust upon the world.* But of all this it would be as unrea-

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ter a superficial book, which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull, boring narrative, pausing to see farther into a millstone every moment than the nature of the millstone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a *minute philosopher*, a botanist, or pebble-gatherer, who is eternally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture, to look at grasses and chucky-stones." If Niebuhr had given us, by his matchless acuteness of investigation and boundless learning, nothing more than the correction of minute dates and the true version of petty events, his powers would have been sadly wasted.

* It is the same in France, in Germany, everywhere. "Scarce has an invitation or washing-bill of the happy Matthison remained unprinted; of Jean Paul we know on what day he got his first braces; of Voss, what he spent in every inn during his little journeys; of Schiller, in what coach he drove to visit Goethe. With such like trash, in short, are the many hundred volumes of biography and correspondence filled." — *Menzel.* Yet even such absurdities are but the abuse of a reasonable wish, — that of knowing celebrated men in their retirement and natural character. The details of their private life are perused, we suspect, with greater eagerness than those of their public career, however splendid. It is true that the "hero" in these cases is as apt to vanish to the eyes of the reader as to the "valet-de-chambre"; but the reader recognizes what he likes better than a "hero," — a man. Still, to see great men in their *undress*, it certainly is not necessary to strip them *stark naked.* The inventory of their linen and their washerwoman's bills might be left sacred.

sonable as ungrateful to complain. Fugitive as the interest of such literature must be, each generation naturally wishes to know more of its contemporaries than a future age will condescend to learn: and from almost the worst of such works some casual gleam of light may illumine the page of the future historian; some fact be rescued which will enable him to adjust more accurately the transactions, and estimate more truly the characters, of the time. The only doubt is whether here, as elsewhere, the very copiousness of the materials will not produce the same effect as the dearth of them; whether the judicial sentence of an historian who shall write three hundred years hence, and who shall *honestly* examine and sift his materials, will not be as little to be hoped for as that of some profound judges, — delayed, and still delayed, till death has overtaken them amidst their unresolved doubts.

While the past is receiving into its tranquil depths such huge masses of literature, it is perpetually yielding us, by a contrary process, and perhaps nearly bulk for bulk, materials which it had long concealed. While work after work of science and history is daily passing away, pushed aside, beyond all chance of republication, by superior works of a similar kind, containing the last discoveries and most accurate results, it is curious to see with what eagerness the literary antiquary, in all departments, is ransacking the past for every fragment of unprinted manuscript. Many of these, if they had been published when they were written, would have been perfectly worthless. They derive their sole value from the rust of age, just as other things derive theirs from the gloss of novelty. It may with truth be said of them, *Periissent, ni periissent;* unless they had been buried, they would never have lived. How many societies have been recently formed with the laudable object of giving to the world what no private enterprise would venture to put to press. It is true that, judging from many of the works thus published, one might be inclined to say that some of our literary treasure-finders were too strongly of Justice Shallow's opinion, that "things that are mouldy lack use." "It was with difficulty," says Geoffrey Crayon, after describing his little antiquarian parson's raptures over the old drinking song, "it was with difficulty the squire was made to comprehend, that, though a jovial song of the present day was but a foolish sound in the ears of wisdom, and beneath the notice of a learned man, yet a trowl written by a tosspot several hundred years since was a matter worthy of the gravest research, and enough to set whole colleges by the ears."

But neither do we complain of all this. As in the case of memoirs and biographies, the laborious trifling of the merest drudge in antiquities may supply the historian with some collateral lights, and furnish materials for more vivid descriptions of the past; or, coming into contact with highly creative minds, like that of Walter Scott, such collections may contribute the rude elements of the sublimest or most beautiful creations of fiction. None can read his novels and despise the study of the most trivial details of local antiquities, when it is seen for what beautiful textures they may supply the threads. It is the privilege of genius such as his to extract their gold-dust out of the most worthless books, — books which to others would be to the last degree tedious and unattractive, — and the felicity with which he did this was one of his most striking characteristics. In hundreds of cases it is wonderful to see how a snatch of an old border song, an antique phrase, used as he uses it, a story or fragment of a story from some obscure author, shall suddenly be invested with an intrinsic force or beauty, which the original would never have suggested to an ordinary reader, and which, in fact, they derive, in nine cases out of ten, from the light of genius which he brought to play upon them. In those bright morning or evening tints even the barren heath or the rugged mass of graystone looks picturesque; or such uses of antiquity remind us of the gate of the old Tolbooth, or fragments of the ruins of Melrose, incorporated with Abbotsford. The quality above referred to, Mr. Lockhart has happily characterized. "The lamp of his zeal burnt on brighter and brighter amidst the dust of parchments; his love and pride vivified whatever he hung over in these dim records, and patient antiquarianism, long brooding and meditating, became gloriously transmuted into the winged spirit of national poetry."

In this way minute portions of the past are constantly entering by new combinations into fresh forms of life, and out of these old materials, continually decomposed but continually recombined, scope is afforded for an everlasting succession of imaginative literature. In the same way every work of genius, by coming, as it were, into mesmeric *rapport* with the affinities of kindred genius, and stimulating its latent energies, is itself the parent of many others, and furnishes the materials and rudiments of ever new combinations.* Of more than one great mind it has been recorded, that they seldom read any work which strongly excited them, without meditating one on a similar theme. The Latin poet complained of the injustice of our fathers in "having stolen all our good things," by uttering them before we had the opportunity. The complaint is one in which an author must look for little sympathy from the world. When we think of the infinite variety of human intellects, — no two of which are alike, any more than men's faces, — the exhaustless variety of nature and of art, and the equally infinite variety of the analogies and relations of objects, we see that the human mind may expatiate for ever, and never find lack of argument, wit, and fancy ; but how small a portion can be preserved or retained ! From the time that Ovid uttered his complaint, to the present moment, the perpetual flood has been pouring upon the world, — and it still rolls on broader and deeper than ever.

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* The greater part of those resemblances in thoughts and images, which a carping criticism sets down as *plagiarisms*, are, we are persuaded, nothing more than such combinations: and even of plagiarism, properly so called, we have as little doubt that the instances are far fewer than has generally been supposed. Many so named have been simple coincidences of thought, the result of similarly constituted minds, revolving the same subjects; and, true though it be that the objects and combinations of thought are infinite, yet considering that humanity, and those things which chiefly interest it, are always and everywhere the same, it is perhaps the inexhaustible variety, and not the occasional similarity, of conceptions which ought to amaze us. The remarks of Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Religio Medici," on some observed coincidences between himself and Montaigne, are well worth the attention of every critic who would be just to genius. Many other supposed plagiarisms are but the unconscious reflection of sentiments and images, the source of which had been long forgotten. A person must be very dull or very uncharitable, — or he will be slow to suspect a mind of any originality of the meanness of larceny. For any such mind must always find it easier to live honestly than by stealing. As to the greater part of those parallelisms and resemblances on which an unworthy criticism has founded the charge against great writers, they will, as we have said, be generally found to indicate nothing more than that the thoughts of others have suggested the germ of new conceptions; new by a juster application, or a more felicitous expression, or a fresh development of the

Considering the vastness of the accumulations of literature, and the impossibility of mastering them, it is not wonder-

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original thought. They are in truth no more plagiarisms than a chemical compound, the result of mysterious affinities, is identical with the elements which enter into it. There is all the difference between suggestion and plagiarism, that there is between *making* blood from food, and receiving it into the veins by transfusion. In Shakspeare and Scott we see both how much and how little a great genius derives from sources without himself. "Observing," says Moore, in his "Life of Lord Byron," "a volume in his gondola, with a number of paper marks between the leaves, I inquired of him what it was. 'Only a book,' he answered, 'from which I am trying to *crib*, as I do whenever I can ; and that 's the way I get the character of an original poet.' On taking it up and looking at it, I exclaimed, 'Ah, my friend Agathon!' 'What!' he cried archly, 'you have been beforehand with me there, have you?'" Though in imputing to himself premeditated plagiarism, he was, of course, but jesting, it was, I am inclined to think, his practice, when engaged in the composition of any work, to excite thus his vein by the perusal of others on the same subject or plan, from which the slightest hint caught by his imagination, as he read, was sufficient to kindle there such a train of thought as, but for that spark, had never been awakened, and of which he himself soon forgot the source." — Vol. IV.

ful that the idea should sometimes have suggested itself, that it might be possible in a series of brief publications to distil, as it were, the quintessence of books, and condense folios into pamphlets. "Were all books thus reduced," says Addison, "many a bulky author would make his appearance in a penny paper. There would scarce be such a thing in nature as a folio; the works of an age would be contained on a few shelves; not to mention millions of volumes that would be utterly annihilated." One such attempt we remember being made with considerable pretensions; but it was as futile as every such attempt must be. Without going the length of Montaigne, who says that "every abridgment of a book is a foolish abridgment," it may be truly said, not only that the human mind cannot profitably digest intellectual food in such a condensed shape, but that every work really worth reading bears upon it the impress of the mind that gave it birth, and ceases to attract and to impress when reduced to a syllabus; its faults and its excellences alike vanish in the process. It is of much importance, however, if authors who cannot be thus mutilated desire to live, that they should study brevity. Our voluminous forefathers of the seventeenth century seem never to have attempted condensation; but to have committed all that they thought to writing, and for the most part in all the redundance of the forms first suggested. They acted as though we, their posterity, should have nothing to do but to sit down and read what they had written. They were much mistaken; and the consequence is, that their folios for the most part remain unread altogether.

It is the severe beauty, the condensed meaning, of the masterpieces of classical antiquity, which, probably as much as any thing else, has given them their victory over time; constituting them not merely models of taste, but rendering them moderate in bulk, — the majority of them *portable*. The light skiff will shoot the cataracts of time when a heavier vessel will infallibly go down.

While it is too sadly certain that by far the greater part of those who toil for remembrance among men must be defrauded of their hopes, it is well for genius to recollect that the doom may be indefinitely delayed by due care on its own part; just as, though nothing can avert death, a wise and prudent regard to health may secure a late termination and a green old age. Or its case may be compared to that of men who labor under some incurable chronic malady; it must be fatal at last,—but by a due regimen and self-control, the patient may outlive many of more robust health, who are madly negligent of the boon. It is astonishing what signal genius will sometimes effect to give permanent popularity to books, even in those departments in which the progress of knowledge soon renders them very imperfect. They maintain their supremacy notwithstanding; and their successors prolong their influence by means of note and supplement. Such will probably be the case with Paley's works on "Natural Theology" and the "Evidences of Christianity." Hume's "History of England" promises to be a still stronger instance, in spite, not only of its many deficiencies, but of its enormous errors.

It is, indeed, a great triumph of genius when it is capable of so impressing itself upon its productions, so moulding and shaping them to beauty, as to make men unwilling to return the gold into the melting-pot, and work it up afresh; when it is felt that from the less accurate work we after all learn more, and receive more vivid impressions, than from the more correct, but less effective, productions of an inferior artist. To attain this species of longevity, genius must not be content with being a mere mason, but must aspire to be an architect; it must seek to give preciousness to the gold and silver by the beauty of the cup or vase into which they are moulded, and to make them as valuable for their form as for their matter.

The French were formerly very sensitive to our want of artistic skill in our literary composition. Indeed, Laharpe presumed to assert that "Tom Jones" was *the only book* in the

English language! But we may take comfort on comparing ourselves with the Germans. There is no country in Europe in which the mortality even of valuable works is so frequently the result of a neglect of this sort as Germany; none in which critics, historians, theologians, are so content to give to the world their crude and imperfect thoughts; marked, indeed, by a prodigality, but as often by an abuse of learning; by a command of ample materials, but employed without judgment, taste, or method. Their books, in consequence, soon give way to another fleeting generation, manufactured in the same way, and with as little hope of permanent popularity.

Nor is there any country, though all are chargeable with the fault, to which Menzel's scornful remarks on "books made out of books," so strongly apply. "Germany," says he, "is thronged with multitudes who, in want of any fixed employment, immediately begin to write books: thus reaping, as soon as possible, the fruits of what they have learned at the universities, and inundating the world with an immense number of crude and boyish works." It is necessary only to inspect many German volumes to see that they are just the produce of a — note-book; that the task has begun and ended in the carting of so much rubbish, and shooting it out into a bookseller's shop, — where, at the best, it may serve as a collection of materials for an edifice which somebody else is to build. Profuse reading is often their only characteristic; and not always is there any sure sign of this: for the prodigal references with which page after page in many such works is half filled, are often slavishly copied from other writers, and the parade of learning is as empty as it is superfluous. Niebuhr bitterly complains of this practice; and justly stigmatizes it as one of the dishonest tricks of literature. He himself tells us, and we doubt not with perfect truth, that he was in the habit of distinctly specifying all those citations which, though employed by him, had not occurred in the course of his own independent study of his authorities; and contends, that wherever a reference has been suggested by another, the secondary as well as the primary authority should be given, accompanied by the statement of obligation. We fear, with Dr. Arnold, that this remedy would not cure the evil; or rather that it would increase it. The pages of these merciless writers would be twice as dull from this double "bestowment of their tediousness"; they would delight in troubling the reader with the whole history of each long literary chase; and consider a double, or still better a quadruple, array of references (though only a series of transcriptions) as a prouder proof of their erudition. What is really required is, that the writer should honestly endeavor to make his citations as *few*, not as *many*, as possible; and confine himself to the most decisive, brief, and accessible. As it is, the references are often such that scarcely three readers in ten could consult them if they would, — and scarcely one out of the three would if he could; while perhaps, nearly as often, the very point thus formidably supported is a fact for which no references are wanted at all; in which the authorities are the only things that require to be confirmed, and the proofs the only things that need verification. Doubtless, this parade of references is often employed for what Whately calls the "*fallacy* of references"; — that is, in support of some questionable point, and in the hope "that not one reader out of twenty will be at the pains" to verify their relevancy, or rather to detect their impertinence. But quite as often they are used for mere ostentation.

Those authors, whose subjects require them to be voluminous, will do well, if they would be remembered as long as possible, not to omit a duty which authors in general, but especially modern authors, are too apt to neglect, — that of appending to their works a good index. For their deplorable deficiencies in this respect, Professor De Morgan, speaking of historians, assigns the curious reason, "that they think to oblige their readers to go through them from beginning to end, by making this the only way of coming at the contents of their volumes. They are much mistaken; and they might learn from their own mode of dealing with the writings of others, how their own will be used in turn." * We think that the unwise indolence of authors has probably had much more to do with the matter, than the reasons thus humorously assigned; but the fact which he proceeds to mention is incontestably true. "No writer" (of this class) "is so much read as the one who makes a good index, — or so much cited."

Johnson, in commenting on the fate of books in one of the papers of the "Idler," speaks of the necessity of an author's choosing a theme of enduring interest, if he would be remembered; and contrasts the once enormous popularity of "Hudibras" with its present *comparative* neglect. Alas! we fear that this is but an insufficient antiseptic. Though it is generally necessary, if an author would have even a *chance* of living, that he should take no temporary topic, he may choose the most enduring — and be ephemeral notwithstanding; and what we cannot conceal from ourselves is, that he may even treat his subject well, and yet be forgotten. But we suspect that this caution is of little importance. Such is the vigor of great genius, — and without it nothing will be remembered, — that where there is *that*, it will triumph over all the disadvantages of a topic of evanescent interest. Pascal's "Provincial Letters" are still read, we apprehend, quite as frequently as Bossuet's "Discourse on Universal History," and even "Hudibras" a good deal more than Johnson's own "Irene"; while the obscurities of some celebrated satire — the very name of a Bufo or a Bavius — shall for ages continue to provoke and baffle the ingenuity of the stolid commentator, who might just as profitably be engaged, with Addison's virtuoso, in the chase of butterflies, or the collection of cockle-shells.

If genius would attain its uttermost longevity, another condition it must submit to is, that of despising an *ad captandum* compliance with transient tastes, and the affectation of peculiarities for the purpose and in the hope of forming, as it were, a school. It is not to be denied that literary fashions, like others, may be extensive and prevalent for a time,— but they expire with the age. Great genius for a while will consecrate almost any eccentricities, and even acquire for them much temporary popularity. But it may well be questioned whether, where there *is* great genius and where it has succeeded by such artifices, it might not, even among its contemporaries, have gained equal applause at a less cost than that of simplicity and nature. But, at all events, let the writer who attempts to attain fame by any such fantastic methods, recollect how ridiculous a reigning fashion looks a century afterwards; for not less ridiculous will then appear every thing that bears the mark of affectation and mannerism, however successful for a time. The Euphuism of Elizabeth's day is now viewed only with contemptuous wonder: and even Dr. Johnson, though he still retains a large measure of popularity, would have retained far more had it not been for his antitheses and his Latinisms. Addison, though nearly a century earlier, is still more admired, and without any deductions.

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* References for the History of the Mathematical Sciences in the Companion to the British Almanac, 1843, p. 42.

It may be said, perhaps, that if in so vast a majority of cases the hope of immortality is a dream, it does not much matter how men write. Success, though ephemeral, is the great point. To this we have, of course, nothing to say, except that we trust many would rather not gain reputation at all, durable or brief, by a departure from simplicity and nature; and that, though immortality be out of the case, a gentle decay and serene old age have always been thought desirable things, rather than a sudden and violent dissolution. Immortality is not to be thought of,—but *euthanasia* is not to be despised.

In turning over the pages of such a book as the "London Catalogue," one is struck, amidst the apparent mutations in literature, with the seemingly fixed and unchanging influence of two portions of it, — the Greek and Roman Classics and the BIBLE. Much of the literature produced by both partakes, no doubt, of the fate which attends other kinds; the books they severally elicit, whether critical or theological, pass away; but they themselves retain their hold on the human mind, become ingrafted into the literature of every civilized nation, and continue to evoke a never-ending series of volumes in their defence, illustration, or explication. On a very moderate computation, we think it may be affirmed, from an inspection of this catalogue, that at least one third of the works it contains are the consequence, more or less direct, of the two portions of literature to which we here refer; in the shape of new editions, translations, commentaries, grammars, dictionaries, or historical, chronological, and geographical illustrations.

The old Greek and Roman Classics have indeed a paradoxical destiny. They cannot, it seems, grow old; and time, which "antiquates antiquity itself," to use an expression of Sir Thomas Browne, still leaves them untouched. The ancients alone possessed in perfection the art of *embalming* thought. The severe taste which surrounds them has operated like the pure air of Egypt in preserving the sculptures and paintings of that country; where travellers tell us that the traces of the chisel are often as sharp, and the colors of the paintings as bright, as if the artists had quitted their work but yesterday.

There is one aspect in which even the most utilitarian despiser of the classics can hardly sneer at them. From being selected by the unanimous suffrage of all civilized nations (the moment they become worthy of the name), as an integral element in all liberal education, as the masters of language and models of taste, these venerable authors play, as this catalogue shows, a very important part even in the commercial transactions of mankind. It is curious to think of these ancient spirits furnishing no inconsiderable portion of the modern world with their daily bread ; and in the employment they give to so many thousands of schoolmasters, editors, commentators, authors, printers, and publishers, constituting a very positive item in the industrial activity of nations. A political economist, thinking only of his own science, should look with respect on the strains of Homer and Virgil ; when he considers that, directly or indirectly, they have probably produced more material wealth than half the mines which human cupidity has opened, or half the inventions of the most mechanical age, — if we except the loom, the steam-engine, and a few score more. It is very foolish of mankind, some may say, to allow them this varied and permanent influence. But into that question we need not enter. We are speaking as to the fact only ; and shall leave mankind to defend themselves.

The Bible, supposing it other than it pretends to be, presents us with a still more singular phenomenon in the space which it occupies throughout the continued history of literature. We see nothing like it ; and it may well perplex the infidel to account for it. Nor need his sagacity disdain to enter a little more deeply into its possible *causes*, than he is usually inclined to do. It has not been given to any *other* book of religion, thus to triumph over national prejudices, and lodge itself securely in the heart of great communities, — varying by every conceivable diversity of language, race, manners, customs, and indeed agreeing in nothing but a veneration for itself. It adapts itself with facility to the revolutions of thought and feeling which shake to pieces all things else ; and flexibly accommodates itself to the progress of society and the changes of civilization. Even conquests, — the disorganization of old nations, — the formation of new, — do not affect the continuity of its empire. It lays hold of the new as of the old, and transmigrates with the spirit of humanity ; attracting to itself, by its own moral power, in all the communities it enters, a ceaseless intensity of effort for its propagation, illustration, and defence. Other systems of religion are usually delicate exotics, and will not bear transplanting. The gods of the nations are local deities, and reluctantly quit their native soil; at all events they patronize only their favorite races, and perish at once when the tribe or nation of their worshippers becomes extinct, — often long before. Nothing, indeed, is more difficult than to make foreigners feel any thing but the utmost indifference (except as an object of philosophic curiosity) about the religion of other nations; and no portion of their national literature is regarded as more tedious or unattractive than that which treats of their theology. The elegant mythologies of Greece and Rome made no proselytes among other nations, and fell hopelessly the moment *they* fell. The Koran of Mahomet has, it is true, been propagated by the sword; but it has been propagated by nothing else; and its dominion has been limited to those nations who could not reply to that logic. If the Bible be false, the facility with which it overleaps the otherwise impassable boundaries of race and clime, and domiciliates itself among so many different nations, is assuredly a far more striking and wonderful proof of human ignorance, perverseness, and stupidity, than is afforded in the limited prevalence of even the most abject superstitions; or if it really has merits which, *though* a fable, have enabled it to impose so comprehensively and variously on mankind, wonderful indeed must have been the skill in its composition; so wonderful that even the infidel himself ought never to regard it but with the profoundest reverence, as far too successful and sublime a fabrication to admit a thought of scoff or ridicule. In his last illness, a few days before his death, Sir Walter Scott asked Mr. Lockhart to read to him. Mr. Lockhart inquired what book he would like. "Can you ask?" said Sir Walter, — "there is but ONE": and requested him to read a chapter of the Gospel of John. When will an *equal* genius, to whom all the realms of fiction are as familiar as to him, say the like of some professed revelation, originating among a race and associated with a history and a clime as foreign as those connected with the birthplace of the Bible from those of the ancestry of Sir Walter Scott? Can we by any stretch of imagination suppose some Walter Scott of a new race, in Australia or South Africa, saying the same of the Vedas or the Koran?

While so large a portion of merely human literature, like all things else that are human, is inscribed with "vanity," it has its "excelling glory" too.

Soberly considered, indeed, the writer has enough to make him contented with his vocation, though not proud of it. The value of books does not depend upon their durability; nor in truth is there any reason, why the philosopher should be more solicitous about these wasted and wasting treasures of mind, than about the death of men, or the decay of the cities they have built, or of the empires they have founded! They but follow the same law which is imposed on all things human, and on things which were created before man. Geologists tell us of vast intervals of time — myriads of years — passed in the tardy revolutions by which our earth was prepared for our habitation, and during which successive generations of animals and vegetables flourished and became extinct; the individuals always, and often the species; — the term of life allotted to them, and their place in the system, being exactly appropriate to the stage in the history of the world's development, and linked, in a law of subserviency, to the successive parts and the various phases of one vast continuous process. Though permitted and organized to enjoy their brief term of life, they were chiefly important as a stepping-stone to the future, and as influencing that future, not by forming part of it, but by having been a necessary condition of its arrival. The same law which seems to be that of the whole history of the geological eras, appears also to characterize our own; the present passes away, but is made subservient to a glorious future. As these geological periods were preparatory to the introduction of the human economy, so the various eras of that economy itself are subordinated to its ultimate and perfect development. Individuals and nations perish, but the progress of humanity is continued; and in this persuasion, the author who has in any tolerable measure endeavored conscientiously "to serve his generation," — awaking from his idle dreams of immortality, — must find, like every other man who has done the same in other ways, his grounds of resignation and consolation. It is pleasing, with the elder Pliny, whose judgment is sanctioned by Leibnitz and Gibbon, to believe that scarcely any book was ever written (not positively immoral) which did not contain something valuable;* some contribution, however small, to the general stock of human knowledge, and still preserved, in other forms, for succeeding ages, though the book itself, like its author, had become food for worms; or something which tended to mould and influence some contemporary mind destined to act with greater power on distant generations. The whole gigantic growth of human knowledge and science may be compared to those deposits which geologists describe, full of the remains of vegetable and animal life, — beautiful once, and beneficial still. The luxuriant foliage and huge forest growth of science and literature which now overshadow us, are themselves rooted in strata of decaying or decayed mind, and derive their nourishment from them; the very soil we turn is the loose *detritus* of thought, washed down to us through long ages. In the world of intellect, as in the world of matter, though "vanity" is written on all things, and oblivion awaits man and his achievements, yet is it also sublimely true, that in both alike Death is itself the germ of life; and new forms of glory and beauty spring from the dust of desolation.

Nor are there wanting more special topics from which the repining author may derive consolation. One is, that, as the number of readers will be perpetually increased, though it may be true that the knowledge of any one of them will bear an ever-diminishing ratio to the absolute accumulations of human science and literature, far more of both will be preserved in the memories of mankind *collectively;* and each writer, worthy to live at all, will find, not indeed temples thronged by admiring worshippers, and altars steaming with sacrifices, but at all events a little oratory here and there, where some solitary devotee will be paying his homage. He cannot hope to be a Jupiter Capitolinus; but he may be the household god of some quiet hearth, and receive there his modest oblation and his pinch of daily incense.

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* "Nullum esse librum tam malum ut non ex aliquâ parte prodesset."

A still further consolation remains for even those who dare not hope for so much as this species of obscure fame. If not preserved entire, they will yet be remembered by fragments; in volumes of specimens and extracts, or, happier still! embalmed in those vast works which will consign to posterity the history of great nations; with the whole story of their political, social, and intellectual development. How many authors, else utterly forgotten, will leave minute relics of themselves in the notes and citations of such works as those of Gibbon and Macaulay! It is but a plank from the wreck, to be sure; but it is something.

Nor do the fond author's hopes end here. We have compared the vast relics of decayed and mouldering literature to the animal and vegetable remains on which our living world flourishes; in which it fastens its roots, and over which it waves its luxuriance. A fanciful mind might pursue the analogy a little further, and discern some resemblance between the mutations and revolutions of literature and books, and those incomparably greater, and yet, to us, scarcely more interesting, changes which have swept over the surface of the material world. Geologists tell us of the successive submersion and elevation of vast tracts of earth, — now rich in animal and vegetable life, — then buried for unnumbered ages in oblivion, — then again reappearing to the light of day, and bearing, dank and dripping from the ocean bed, the memorials of their past glories. It is much the same with the treasures of buried literature. Long whelmed beneath the inundations of barbarism, or buried in the volcanic eruptions of war and conquest, we see them, after centuries of "cold obstruction," once more coming to light; — the fossil remains of ancient life; — forms of power, of beauty, or deformity; — characterized indeed by many analogies to the present species of organized life, but also by many differences.

The revival of classical literature, after the dark ages, was the greatest and most splendid of these recoveries of the past; and must have awakened in the minds of the generation which witnessed it, emotions very similar to those with which men gazed on the treasures of Herculaneum and Pompeii, when those ancient cities were first opened to the day.

Though this is the grandest of all such restorations, let the author remember for his comfort (if not too bashful), that a similar process is perpetually going on, though on a smaller scale. Discussions and controversies, which had been hushed for ages, break out again, like long silent volcanoes; men turn with renewed eagerness to the opinions of persons who had been forgotten apparently for ever; and names which had not been heard for centuries, once more fill men's mouths and are trumpeted to the four winds. A pleasantly oracular saying, or a half-anticipation of some newly discovered truth, is found in the voluminous writings of an ancient author, and excites a passing glow of veneration to his name and works. In the indefatigable grubbings and gropings of the literary antiquary, again, scarcely any authors need despair of an occasional remembrance; of producing some curiosities for those cabinets where the most precious and the most worthless of relics are preserved with impartial veneration. It is hard to say what his spade and mattock may not bring up. What honor to furnish to the Cuviers of critical science, though but in a fossil bone or shell, a theme for their conjectures and learned dissertations; and perhaps be even constructed into a more magnificent creature than nature ever made the original! Who could have hoped, a few years back, to see the reappearance of so much of our early literature as we have recently witnessed? And who could have anticipated how wide a range the transient, but, while they last, most active, fashions of literary research would take? Now it is Saxon, Danish, Norman antiquities; — now local traditions, and old songs and ballads; — now the old dramatists have their turn, and now the old divines. Who could have expected to see the venerable Bede's "opera omnia" in English as well as Latin, published in all the glories of modern typography? "It is hard to say," says Sir Thomas Browne, speaking of our bodies, "how often we are to be buried": the same may be said of our minds; and though this successive resurrection and entombment is not immortality, it bears a close resemblance to transmigration. It is true that a malicious wit might hint that not a little of this exhumed literature is immediately recommitted to the dust, and that its resurrection is but for a second celebration of its obsequies. He will be inclined to say what Horace Walpole says of some other antiquarian recoveries: "What signifies raising the dead so often, when they die the next minute?"

How singular has been the destiny of Aristotle! After having been lost to the world for ages, we see him making a second and wider conquest, and founding the most durable and absolute despotism of mind the world has ever seen! After a second dethronement, he is now fighting his way back to no mean empire, — an empire promising to be all the more permanent, that it is founded in a juster estimate of his real claims on the gratitude and reverence of mankind, and that he is invited to wield the sceptre, not of a despot, but of a constitutional monarch.

But our author sighs, and says with truth and *naïveté*, "There are so few Aristotles!" We reply, with a perseverance in suggesting consolation worthy of Boethius or Mr. Shandy, that, supposing none of these sedatives sufficient to soothe wounded vanity, there are still others. And among them, assuredly not the least are those least thought of; we mean, the pleasures of composition itself; perhaps, after all, the greatest of an author's rewards: just as, in so many other cases, happiness is found, not in the object we professedly seek, but in the efforts to obtain it, and in the energetic employment of our faculties. If, indeed, the experience of Buffon were that of authors in general, none would deny this, and the passion for writing would become a universal madness. Speaking of the hours of composition, he says: "These are the most *luxurious* and *delightful* moments of life; which have often enticed me to pass fourteen hours a day at my desk, in a state of transport; this gratification, more than glory, is my reward."* But we fear that there are not a few writers, and of no mean fame, who, while conceding that when their minds wrought freely, and their faculties lay in sunshine, the moments of composition were among the happiest of their life, would also affirm that those in which they have had to struggle against the *vis inertiæ* which prevented them from commencing their task, or to contend with half-formed conceptions and intractable expressions, till the sun broke through the mist, and thought became clear and words obedient, were among the most painful. Well spoke one who has, we apprehend, experienced all the raptures and all the agonies of composition:—

> "When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
> How oft the malice of one luckless word
> Pursues the enthusiast to the social board,
> Haunts him, belated, on the silent plains.
> Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
> At last, of hinderance and obscurity,
> Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn."

We are inclined to place the pleasure of writing itself, among the chief incentives of authorship; and the proof is found in this, that so few ever stop when they have once begun, — not even for neglect or poverty. "There are millions of men," says Byron, "who have never written a book, but few who have written *only one.*" And Walter Scott's testimony to the inveteracy of the *cacoethes scribendi* is equally strong. Not even the ointment of sarcasm and satire can cure it.

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* Cited in "Curiosities of Literature." See the whole of the amusing anecdotes on Literary Composition.

Perhaps even this will not be taken as sufficient compensation: why then let the author remember, that, in the only intelligible sense, he enjoys almost as extensive a fame as his betters. There is a little circle of which each man is the centre; and this narrow theatre is generally enough for the accommodating vanity of the human heart. Indeed, it is of that microcosm in which each man dwells, that even the loftiest ambition is *really* thinking, when it whispers to itself some folly about distant regions and remote ages, whose plaudits will never greet his ear, and which he utterly fails to realize. It is, after all, the applause of the familiar friends, among whom he daily lives, that he craves and loves. It may be doubted whether Musäus was ever so delighted with the thought of posthumous renown, as he was when his little boy, discovering from an upstairs window a fresh troop of visitors coming, as the child supposed, with the usual offering of congratulations on his father's sudden success, cried out, "Here are more people coming to praise papa!"

Should our friends and family form too small a sphere for the vaulting ambition of self-love, we must needs content ourselves with the questionable comfort suggested in the case of our literal death, not only by Cicero and his imitator, Mr. Shandy, but by all other consolers, from the time of Job's comforters downwards; — that it is the "common lot," and that "what is the doom of our betters is good enough for us." Nor will vanity fail to whisper: "Not the worthless alone are forgotten, — gold, silver, pearls, and jewels strew the bottom of the ocean. It is not the will of man, but the law of nature, that I should die."

In truth, for an honest man, the single sentence already quoted from Pliny will be consolation enough. Like every other honest man who does his duty to the present hour, and who dreams not of asking immortality for his merits, it will be sufficient to the writer, to have "served his generation." Nor need we say, in how important a degree each individual has done this! It is a topic easily improved upon, by the happy facility of human vanity; for all are ready enough to believe, — and certainly authors as much as any, — that they have not trifled life away; and to think of their doings much as Uncle Toby did of his mimic fortifications: "Heaven is my witness, brother Shandy, that the pleasure I have taken in these things, and that infinite delight in particular, which has attended my sieges in my bowling-green, has arose within me, and I hope in the Corporal too, from the consciousness we both had, that in carrying them on we were answering the great ends of our creation."

But, without a gibe, the destiny of the honest writer, even though but moderately successful, and much more if long and widely popular, is surely glorious and enviable. It may be true that he is to die, — for we do not count the record of a name when the works are no longer read as any thing better than an epitaph, and even that may vanish; yet to come into contact with other minds, even though for limited periods, — to move them by a silent influence, — to coöperate in the construction of character, — to mould the habits of thought, — to promote the dominion of truth and virtue, — to exercise a spell over those one has never seen and never can see, — in other climes, — at the extremity of the globe, — and when the hand that wrote is still for ever, — is surely a most wonderful and even awful prerogative. It comes nearer to the idea of the immediate influence of spirit on spirit, than any thing else with which this world presents us. It is of a purely moral nature; it is also silent as the dew, — invisible as the wind! We can adequately conceive of such an influence only by imagining ourselves, under the privilege of the ring of Gyges, to gaze, invisible, on the solitary reader as he pores over a favorite author, and watch in his countenance, as in a mirror, the reflection of the page which holds him captive; now knitting his brow over a difficult argument, and deriving at once discipline and knowledge by the effort, — now relaxing into smiles at wit and humor, — now dwelling with a glistening eye on tenderness and pathos, — and, in either case, the subject of emotions which not only constitute the mood of the moment, but in their measure coöperate to the formation of those *habits* which issue in character and conduct; now yielding up some fond illusion to the force of truth, and anon betrayed into another by the force of sophistry; now rebuked for some vice or folly, and binding himself with renewed vows to the service of virtue; and now sympathizing with the too faithful delineation of vicious passions and depraved pleasures, and strengthening by one more rivet the dominion of evil over the soul! Surely, to be able to wield such a power as this implies, in any degree and for limited periods, is a stupendous attribute; one which, if more deeply pondered, would frequently cause a writer to pause and tremble, as though his pen had been the rod of an enchanter.

Happy those who have wielded it well, and who,

> "Dying, leave no line they wish to blot."

Happier, far happier such, in the prospect of speedy extinction, than those whose loftier genius promises immortality of fame, and whose abuse of it renders that immortality a curse. Melancholy indeed is the lot of all, whose high endowments have been worse than wasted; who have left to that world which they were born to bless, only a legacy of shame and sorrow; whose vices and follies, unlike those of other men, are not permitted to die with them, but continue active for evil after the men themselves are dust.

It becomes every one who aspires to be a writer to remember this. The ill which other men do, for the most part dies with them. Not, indeed, that this is literally true, even of the obscurest of the species. We are all but links in a vast chain which stretches from the dawn of time to the consummation of all things, and unconsciously receive and transmit a subtle influence. As we are, in a great measure, what our forefathers made us, so our posterity will be what we make them; and it is a thought which may well make us both proud and afraid of our destiny.

But such truths, though universally applicable, are more worthy of being pondered by great authors than by any other class of men. These outlive their age; and their thoughts continue to operate immediately on the spirit of their race. How sad, to one who feels that he has abused his high trust, to know that he is to perpetuate his vices; that he has spoken a spell for evil, and cannot unsay it; that the poisoned shaft has left the bow, and cannot be recalled! If we might be permitted to imagine for a moment that it is a part of the reward or punishment of departed spirits, to revisit this lower world and to trace the good or evil consequences of their actions, what more deplorable condition can be conceived than that of a great but misguided genius, taught, before he departed, the folly of his course, and condemned to witness its effects without the power of arresting them? How would he sigh for that day which shall cover his fame with a welcome cloud, and bury him in the once dreaded oblivion! How would he covet as the highest boon the loss of that immortality for which he toiled so much and so long! With what feelings would he see the productions of his wit and fancy, proscribed and loathed by every man whose love and veneration are worth possessing! With what anguish would he see the subtle poison he had distilled take hold of innocence; watch the first blushes of still ingenuous shame, see them fade away from the cheek as evil became familiar, trace in *his* influence the initial movements in that long career of agony and remorse and shame which awaits his victims; and shudder to think that those whose faith he has destroyed, or whose morals he has corrupted, may find him out in the world of spirits, to tax him as their seducer to infamy and crime! *

Even such authors, however, will reach the oblivion they have desired, at last; for this must be the ultimate doom (whatever might otherwise have been the case) of all who have set at defiance the maxims of decency, morality, and religion, — however bright their genius, and however vast their powers. As the world grows older, and, we trust, better, — as it approximates to that state of religious and moral elevation which Christianity warrants us to anticipate, many a production which a licentious age has pardoned for its genius, will be thrown aside in spite of it. In that day, if genius rebelliously refuse, as it assuredly will not, — for the highest genius has not even hitherto refused, — to consecrate itself to goodness, the world will rather turn to the humblest productions which are instinct with virtue, than to the fairest works of genius when polluted by vice. In a word, the long idolatry of intellect which has enslaved the world will be broken; and that world will perceive that, bright as genius may be, virtue is brighter still.

Happy the writers who, if destined to live so long, have, with souls prophetic of the great change, and true to the dictates of morality and religion, never written a line but what after ages may gratefully turn to for solid instruction or in-

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* To see this matter in its true light must, we fear, be left to the more unclouded vision of another world. Literary vanity is almost the last foible that is surrendered in this. There is much knowledge of human nature, as well as keen satire, in the tale which Addison tells of the atheist, who, bewailing on his death-bed the mischief his works would do after he was gone, quickly repented of his repentance, when his spiritual adviser unhappily sought to alleviate his grief by assuring him that his arguments were so weak, and his writings so little known, that he need not be under any apprehensions. "The dying man had still so much of the frailty of an author in him, as to be cut to the heart with these consolations; and, without answering the good man, asked his friends where they had picked up such a blockhead? and whether they thought him a proper person to attend one in his condition?"

nocent delight; and happy, also, all who, though not destined to see those distant times, have in any measure contributed to form and hasten them!

Plato, in a well-known passage of his Phædrus, describes Socrates as contending for the superiority of oral instruction, by representing books as *silent.* The inferiority of the written word to the living voice is in many respects undeniable; but surely it is more than compensated by the advantage of its diffusive and permanent character. Great as has been the influence of Socrates, he owes it almost entirely to the books he refused to write! and it might have been greater still, had he condescended to write some of his own.

But the chief glory of all human literature — taking it collectively — is, that it is our pledge and security against the retrogradation of humanity; the effectual breakwater against barbarism; the *ratchet* in the great wheel of the world, which, even if it stand still, prevents it from slipping back. Ephemeral as man's books are, they are at least not so ephemeral as himself; and consign without difficulty to posterity what would otherwise never reach them. A good book is the Methuselah of these latter ages.

We must conclude, however, lest we should have reason to apply to ourselves the words of old Fuller: "But what do I, speaking against multiplicity of books in this age, who trespass in this nature myself? What was a learned man's compliment, may serve for my confession and conclusion. *Multi mei similes hoc morbo laborant — ut cùm scribere nesciant, tamen a scribendo temperare non possint.*" — Even as it is, we fear that some of our readers will be disposed to say that we have illustrated the "vanity," without proving the "glory," of literature.

RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.*

THE metempsychosis of error is a curious phenomenon. Though not immortal, it transmigrates through many modes of being before it is finally destroyed. Apparently dead, buried, rotten, — consigned to dust and darkness so long ago, that the very volumes in which it lies entombed are worm-eaten, and the controversies in which it seemingly perished no longer read, it often breathes and lives again after the lapse of centuries, and "revisits the glimpses of the moon"; — not usually, it is true, in the very form in which it disappeared, — in *that* it would not be lightly tolerated again, — but in a shape adapted to new times and circumstances; with an organization, so to speak, which qualifies it to exist in a different element of thought and feeling. The chrysalis becomes perhaps a gaudy butterfly, misleading into a foolish chase thousands of those overgrown boys of the human family, who, it may be, would have despised it in its original deformity.

At this none need wonder; for if error passes through many changes, it is because human nature is still the same.

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* "Edinburgh Review," January, 1843.

1. *Mémoire en Faveur de la Liberté des Cultes.* Par ALEXANDRE VINET. 8vo. à Paris. 1828.

2. *The Articles treated on in Tract XC. reconsidered, and their Interpretation vindicated; in a Letter to the Rev. R. W. Jelf, D. D., Canon of Christ Church.* By the Rev. E. B. PUSEY, D. D. 8vo. Oxford. 1841.

In every successive age are reproduced minds with all the tendencies which have characterized those of the past; with the same affinities for special classes of error, or the same disposition to exaggerate and distort truth itself into substantial falsehood. Such minds may be, and usually are, modified by the age in which they live, the education to which they have been subjected, the circumstances under which they have been developed; but they exist, and with an idiosyncrasy so marked, that, even if they have never been stimulated by a knowledge of the theories of those who have erred, and been confuted before them, they often exhibit an invincible tendency to similar extravagances. What Thucydides has said of the parallelisms which may be perpetually expected in political history, is just as applicable to the history of opinions: — *γιγνόμενα μὲν καὶ ἀεὶ ἐσόμενα ἕως ἂν ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἀνθρώπων ᾖ, μᾶλλον δὲ, καὶ ἡσυχαίτερα, καὶ τοῖς εἴδεσι διηλλαγμένα.* . . . . . Yet is there reason to hope well of the ultimate destinies of our race; and to believe that the progress towards the final triumph of Truth and Right is steady and certain, in spite of the alternate flux and reflux of the tide.

The remarks just made on the resuscitation of ancient error at distant intervals, and in new forms, have been signally illustrated in that great controversy, or rather complication of controversies, to which the discussion of what are called "High-Church Principles" has recently given rise; and to none of the antique novelties (if we may use such an expression) commended to us by the advocates of those principles are they more applicable, than to the doctrines recently propounded by one and another of them on the subject of the "Right of Private Judgment." Of all the peculiarities of this modern-antique School, none, in our opinion, is of graver import or of darker omen, than its opposition, more or less disguised, to this great principle.

Few, in the present day, would seek the restoration of the brutal, or rather diabolical, laws of ancient persecution, any more than they would, even if the choice were given them, breathe life into the bones of a Gardiner or a Bonner. To take those laws expressly under protection, in defiance both of reason and experience; in defiance of the arguments of such men as Taylor, Chillingworth, Bayle, Locke, and others scarcely less illustrious, and of the terrible condemnation supplied in the records of persecution itself, were the sheerest insanity. Whatever some may secretly wish, not only are hanging and burning for religious opinions abolished; but even the more "moderate forms" of persecution, as our ancestors facetiously called them, and which its sturdier advocates despised as poor, peddling arts, — the thumbscrew, branding, the pillory, incarceration, banishment, — are quite out of date. Under these circumstances, any attempts to revive ancient error in relation to the "Right of Private Judgment" must be very cautious; and such, with some exceptions which have equally moved our abhorrence and indignation, we have found them to be. Not only would expediency dictate moderation, if the public is to be induced to listen at all; but we trust that, in the vast majority of instances, even amongst men who cherish the most *ultra* "High-Church Principles," honor and conscience would alike recoil from the employment of the ancient methods under any modifications. How far, indeed, such men may sympathize with the views on which we shall presently animadvert, — whether, though they do not at present avow it, they may not, as in other cases, have their esoteric doctrine, to which the public is not yet to be admitted, — whether that "reserve" which they advocate "in the communication of religious truth" be not operating here also, — we have no means of judging. Our hope and belief is, that the greater part of those who question, in one way or another, the "Right of Private Judgment," would not actually resort to any of the exploded forms of persecution. At all events, we shall not believe they would, except where they expressly tell us so. We flatter ourselves they would not find it so easy to throw off the spirit of their own age, as to apologize for the excesses of the past; or to repress the best feelings of their hearts, as to quench the light of their understandings. We shall, accordingly, bring no indefinite charges against any body of men. The particular modifications of opinion to which we object shall be referred to their proper authors; and chapter and verse duly cited for the representations we may make of them. But whether they may be many or few who sympathize with the more reckless of the modern Propagandists of the doctrine of persecution, there is no reason to anticipate that they will be actually successful. They never can be, until they can convert the present into the past, or make the wheels of time roll backward. It does not follow, however, that their attempts can be safely neglected; or that their opinions are not sufficiently dangerous to justify severe animadversion. Their intrinsic falsity, absurdity, and inconsistency would be ample warrant for that. But when we reflect further, on the tendency of such opinions to confound and perplex the unthinking, — to foster malignity of temper, — to perpetuate the remnant of intolerance which still dwells amongst us, — to endear to some spiteful minds the petty forms of persecution which are still within their reach, — to make them hanker after the forbidden indulgences of an obsolete cruelty, — it becomes a duty to denounce them. Nor is it less incumbent to expose those more plausible, and perhaps, on that account, more dangerous invasions of the "Right of Private Judgment," which would delude multitudes into the belief that, on the authority of fallible mortals like themselves, they may repress the voice of conscience, receive as true things which they do not believe to be so, and practise, as innocent, rites which they deem forbidden.

One would think it very superfluous at this time of day to define what is meant by the "Right of Private Judgment," or to guard these terms against misapprehension. One would imagine that any mistakes about the phrase, or the mode in which it is usually understood, could not be otherwise than wilful; and, in truth, we honestly confess, it is out of our power to regard them in any other light. A recent writer, however, has attempted to show, that in the greater number of cases in which the "Right of Private Judgment" would be usually said to be exercised, it is not in fact exercised at all. Why? Because there is no protracted, deliberate examination as to which is the true religion, and a decision logically formed accordingly, — education, feeling, prejudice, accident, having much to do with the judgment ultimately expressed! Can any thing be more absurd? Does this writer imagine that those who contend for the "Right of Private Judgment" mean that none can actually exercise it but those who have first of all certified themselves, by actual inspection of the proofs adduced in favor of every religion that has subsisted, or still subsists, in the world, that their own is the only true one? That a man cannot be a Christian, consistently with the exercise of his "Right of Private Judgment," unless he has examined and decided whether Hindooism or Mahometanism may not have equal claims? Or (confining ourselves to Christianity alone) that he cannot be a Christian, in virtue of the exercise of the "Right of Private Judgment," if he has not profoundly examined the wide question of the Christian evidences; or a Calvinist or Arminian, unless he has duly pondered the quinquarticular controversy? Could this author be so ignorant as to suppose that the advocates of the right meant this? It is notorious that writers by this phrase mean the right of *individually judging* — no matter what the *grounds* of that judgment — what is religious truth, and what not; not merely the abstract right of every man (though, it is true, each has it) deliberately to examine, if he has leisure and is so inclined, any or all systems of religion, and to make selection of that which he conscientiously deems the true accordingly; but the right — in whatever way he may have arrived at his actual convictions of what is religious truth — to maintain and express that conviction, to the exclusion of all means beyond those of argument and persuasion, to make him think, or rather (for that is impossible by any except such means) to make him *say*, otherwise. In a word, whether the phrase be abstractedly the best that could have been employed or not, it is chiefly designed to disallow the right of *forcing* us to believe, or profess to believe, as others bid us. This, in fact, is what is really contended for; and it implies not merely the right to judge for ourselves, but, *so far as coercion is concerned*, the right, if we please, not to judge at all; for though no man has a moral right to be in the wrong, it does not follow that another man has the right to employ force to reclaim him from his error. Much needless discussion has been wasted on this point by the adversaries of this doctrine, both ancient and modern; and yet nothing is more certain, or more a matter of daily experience, even where religion is not directly in question. A man has no moral right to get drunk at his own table; and yet he has a right to deal very unceremoniously with any one who would by force prevent him. And so in a thousand other cases.

We feel ashamed of having been compelled, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to say any thing in explanation of the meaning so generally and notoriously attached to the phrase, "Right of Private Judgment." Such being its meaning, however, we feel still more ashamed that there are to be found any who will deny the right itself. Yet such is the case with the writer to whom we have just referred, and who has incurred the additional odium of questioning that right, even as limited — and, one would have thought, put beyond controversy — by his own absurd interpretation of it. To one who was disposed to question the right, it might be imagined more reasonable, or rather less unreasonable, to deny it, on the supposition that it was designed to protect *all* consciences, whether the judgment formed was the result of deliberate examination or not, than on his own supposition that the right was contended for *only* where such deliberate examination had been made. Yet even such limited exercise of the right, this author does not think it proper to concede to us. According to his notions, if any one judges it proper to exercise this right, it is quite competent to the civil magistrate to inflict penalties on him for so doing. That any one would have been insane enough to contend for such a proposition in the present day, we could not have believed, had we not read the statement with our own eyes. In order to protect ourselves from any charge of misrepresentation, and to prevent others from participating in the incredulity into which, apart from such evidence, we should undoubtedly have fallen, we shall cite the following passage: — "Now the first remark which occurs is an obvious one, which, we suppose, will be suffered to pass without opposition, that, whatever be the intrinsic merits of private judgment, yet, if it at all exerts itself in the direction of proselytism and conversion, a certain *onus probandi* is upon it, and it must show cause, before it is tolerated, why it should not be convicted forthwith as a breach of the peace, and silenced *instanter* as a mere disturber of the existing constitution of things. Of course it may be safely exercised in defending what is established; and we are far indeed from saying that it is never to advance in the direction of change or revolution, else the Gospel itself could never have been introduced; but we consider that such material changes have a *primâ facie* case against them, — they have something to get over, — and have to prove their admissibility, before it can reasonably be granted; and their agents may be called upon to suffer, in order to prove their earnestness, and to pay the penalty of the trouble they are causing. Considering the special countenance given in Scripture to quiet unanimity and contentedness, and the warnings directed against disorder, irregularity, a wavering temper, discord, and division; considering the emphatic words of the Apostle, laid down as a general principle, and illustrated in detail, 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called'; considering, in a word, that change is really the characteristic of error, and unalterableness the attribute of truth, of holiness, of Almighty God himself, — we consider that when private judgment moves in the direction of innovation, it may well be regarded with suspicion, and treated with severity. Nay, we confess even a satisfaction, when a penalty is attached to the expression of new doctrines, or to a change of communion. We repeat it, if persons have strong feelings, they should pay for them : if they think it a duty to unsettle things established, they should show their earnestness by being willing to suffer. We shall be the last to complain of this kind of persecution, even though directed against what we consider the cause of truth. Such disadvantages do no harm to that cause in the event, but they bring home to a man's mind his own responsibility; they are a memento to him of a great moral law ; and warn him that his private judgment, if not a duty, is a sin." *

This is, in some respects, a remarkable passage. One would almost suspect that it must be a plagiarism from some ancient writer, were it not that people do not generally steal infected garments, nor, like old Elwes, appropriate as precious, things they have picked up out of the kennel. We almost involuntarily look for marks of quotation, or some archaisms of expression which would fix the date of the paragraph some two centuries ago. For ourselves, we peruse these arguments, thus recalled from the dead, with feelings much akin to those with which we should witness the exhumation of a mummy from the depths of the Pyramids, or the exhibition of some uncouth-looking weapons dug out of an ancient tumulus ; — wondering the while at the strange chance by which things so long buried in darkness attract the gaze of men once more. We seem to be present at the

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* *British Critic*, July, 1841. — It is not our wont to make lengthened references to contemporary journals. If we have departed from the usual course on the present occasion, it is assuredly, not because the journal in question is intrinsically entitled to much notice, but because it is generally considered to be the chief organ and representative of the party who advocate the principles of the Oxford Tracts.

awakening of some Rip Van Winkle, who had been sleeping, not like him of the "Sketch-Book," for twenty, but two hundred years. Why, these arguments are but a feeble repetition of those which Locke so utterly demolished in those matchless specimens of cogent and almost scornful logic, — the second and third letters on "Toleration"; and which Bayle had refuted before him, in his amusing commentary on the words, "Compel them to come in." Few will bring themselves to believe that the majority even of those who in general agree with the journal from which the above passage is extracted, can sympathize with the views of this writer. If they do, the people of England would do well to watch with double jealousy and suspicion the progress of "High-Church principles." If such men as he should achieve that triumph of their principles for which they are professedly striving, the dearest privileges of Englishmen would no longer be safe.

There is nothing whatever to distinguish the doctrines of this writer from those which characterize the most barefaced, naked system of ancient persecution; — nothing which might not have fallen from the lips of a Gardiner or a Bonner, — nay, from those of a Nero or a Diocletian. For there is absolutely nothing to limit the *principles* laid down; and those principles, thus unlimited in themselves, and pushed to their legitimate extent, are sufficient to authorize any atrocities. That which is established, no matter what, has on that account presumption in its favor of being right and true; and therefore, wherever "private judgment at all exerts itself in the direction of proselytism and conversion," it must "show cause," before it is tolerated, why it should not be "convicted forthwith as a breach of the peace, and silenced *instanter* as a mere disturber of the existing constitution of things." It must show cause. To whom? Why, to the very parties, to be sure, who are interested in suppressing it, — who believe that it has "no cause to show"; and until *they* are satisfied — for the innovators are surely satisfied — that it has warrant for what it says, it may be suppressed *instanter*, and convicted of a breach of the peace! A man must not preach Christianity at Rome, till he shows cause to the satisfaction of a Nero or a Diocletian that there is a sufficiency of reason on his side; and, till then, he may be suppressed *instanter*. That our author did not mean even to exclude this, the strongest case, is evident by his own allusion to "the introduction of the Gospel": and he has plainly left us to infer from his principles, that, though it was right of the Apostles to preach, it was equally right in the heathen to persecute them for so doing; the innovators not having "shown cause" — as how could they to Pagans? — that "their case was admissible," and "that there was nothing in it which might not be got over." The same principles would of course justify the Papists in persecuting the Protestants, and Protestants in persecuting the Papists; and every form, either of truth or error, that happens to be established, in persecuting every exercise of private judgment that happens to be at variance with it. It must be confessed that these are comprehensive principles of persecution, but we do not like them the worse for that: they are at all events consistent, however indescribably absurd. The accident of previous possession determines, it seems, the right to suppress, and whether it be truth or error, it is all the same: only, as truth is one, while error is multiform, error will have the advantage of this ruthless consistency in a hundred cases to one. And as truth and error are armed with equal right to employ this concise method of "suppressing *instanter*"; so, as in the older systems of persecution, there is here nothing whatever to limit the degree of severity or violence which it may be deemed necessary to employ for that purpose. The duty is to "suppress *instanter*," unless sufficient cause be shown to those who are disinclined to see it; and we presume, that as, when they do not see it, they are bound to suppress *instanter*, they are at liberty to take any steps for that purpose which may be effectual; for to limit them to the use only of means which may be ineffectual, and which sturdy recusants may set at defiance, would be altogether nugatory. A right of suppressing error, provided it *can* be suppressed by the stocks or the pillory, conjoined with a liberty to let it run rampant if hanging or burning is necessary, would be a curious limitation: and, as it would be unreasonable to set any such limits, so it would be impossible. What is excess of severity in the code of one set of persecutors, is childish lenience in that of another. One man might be satisfied with the pillory; another with nothing less than the rack. Our modern apologist for ancient cruelty has, therefore, wisely attempted no such limitation; but, under the general expression of "satisfaction" at the "infliction of penalties," has left every variety of persecutors to select their own. "Help yourselves, gentlemen," is virtually, though we hope not designedly, his language, "according to your diversified tastes and appetites. The table is bountifully spread; the pillory, the rack, the scourge, the boot, the gibbet, the axe, the stake, — confiscation, mutilation, expatriation, — are all very much at your service, whenever those who broach novel opinions do not "show cause," to *your* satisfaction, that you would be wrong if you attempted to repress them." *

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* The reasoning by which this writer attempts to establish these conclusions, is as curious as are the conclusions themselves. He actually thinks that the *fact* of being *established*, is a presumption of truth in a world where there are a thousand different systems of religious opinion established; and yet it is not possible that more than one of these can be the absolute truth! He actually thinks that *fixedness* is presumption of truth in a world where the most steadfast and ancient systems of religious opinion have been, and are, notoriously, those of the worst superstition! He thinks "unalterableness" a mark of truth, in a world where the great innovation that is at length to remedy its miseries was reserved till four thousand years after its creation! "Change" a characteristic of error in a world the great law of which is incessant change! It is true that "unalterableness" is an attribute of truth, inasmuch as truth is always one and the same; but *he* would have us infer that what has been long "unaltered" is "true"; if this were so, as already shown, there would be a thousand different and conflicting systems of truth in the world. With equal logic, this writer actually imagines that the injunc-

It would be a melancholy waste of time to attempt a formal proof of the wickedness and folly of persecution. Yet, as it appears that in the year of grace 1841 it was possible for one who could at least write and spell — whatever other attributes of a rational nature he might have or want — to apologize for it, or rather to panegyrize it, it may not be uninstructive to exhibit, in one or two paragraphs, the crushing arguments by which the principles of religious freedom were first established; and the various modifications of the theory of persecution which its advocates were contented to frame, before they would wholly forego it. And most impressive it is to see how tenacious of life the monster was; — how many and oft repeated the exorcisms by which the demon was at length expelled.

We shall merely *state* the principal arguments; to state them is now enough. It was argued then, — That it is not within a ruler's province to determine the religion of his subjects, — he having no commission to attempt it; not from

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tion, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," has something to do with the determination of the present question; — that an injunction not capriciously to change our secular profession can be any warrant for inflicting penalties on those who innovate on established opinions in religion, inasmuch as it is a probable case that they are actuated thereto by caprice and fickleness; or that it can justify acquiescence in opinions or practices which the conscience disapproves! Truly, this text of "abiding in that calling wherein we are called," is a short method of effectually settling the scruples of a restless conscience, and of insuring, to the world's end, that there shall be no further conversions from one system of opinions to another. The various *castes* are fixed, and let not any go out of them. He that is a Brahmin, let him be a Brahmin still; he that is a Mahometan, let him be a Mahometan still; he that is a Christian, — Calvinist or Arminian, Episcopalian or Presbyterian, — let him be such still; for "let every man abide in that calling wherein he is called." One cannot wonder, after this, that Thomas Aquinas should have been able to prove that it is the duty of inferiors in the Church to submit to their superiors, from the words, "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses were feeding beside them"; nor at the astuteness of that Papist who affirmed the propriety of worshipping the saints, *because* it is written, "God is wonderful in all his works."

Scripture, for Peter and Paul preached Christianity in defiance of the magistrate; not from compact on the part of the people, for few would, and none could if they would, surrender to another the care of their salvation: That religion, except as intelligent and voluntary, is nothing worth: That, in the very nature of things, the employment of *force* to make men believe, is a palpable absurdity: That, for example, the thumbscrew can never make a man believe the doctrine of the Trinity; and that, if it make him *say* he believes it when he does not, all that the thumbscrew does is to make the man a liar and hypocrite, in addition to being a heretic: That the unprincipled will escape by conforming, and only the conscientious be punished; so that the sole result is perjury on the one hand, and gratuitous suffering on the other: That the alleged power is as inexpedient as it is unjust; for rulers are no more likely to know religious truth than private persons, as is proved by the diversity of opinions among rulers themselves; nor so likely as many, for they are principally occupied with very different objects: That if the rulers' religion be a false one, all the above evils are aggravated, for error has then all the advantage; those who are really converted being converted to error; those who only *say* they are converted, embracing error with a lie in their right hand; while the suffering falls solely on those who are in possession of the truth: That supposing the right to *compel* resides in the magistrate, it must reside in every magistrate; and as truth is but one and error multiform, there will, on the whole, be a hundredfold as much force employed against the truth as for it: That if it be said, as was often most vainly said, "it is the duty of the magistrate to compel only to the true religion," the question returns, "Who is to be the judge of truth?" while, as each ruler will judge *his own* religion to be true, this is but going a roundabout way to the same point: That the system, if justifiable at all, will authorize and necessitate the utmost severities; for if it be the duty of the magistrate to compel all to adopt his religion, the methods which will most surely and speedily effect this, will be the best; that, therefore, burning, hanging, torture, being the most thorough and most likely to be successful, are to be preferred: lastly, That after the most remorseless and protracted application of the system, history affords the most striking proofs that it can never be successful; that the uniformity sought can never be obtained; that the conscientious are only the more fully convinced of the truth of their system, whether it be truth or error; that fortitude will be prepared to endure all that cruelty is prepared to inflict; and that not only in the history of Christianity, but in that of all religions, it has been seen that "the blood of the Martyrs has been the seed of the Church."

These arguments, and such as these, were, and will ever be, felt to be resistless against the ancient and only consistent scheme of persecution. No wonder, then, that men who could not gainsay, and yet would not adopt them, should seek some mitigated system, which might leave them still the luxury of persecution, or secure their darling idol of uniformity with less expense to humanity and logic. It is curious to see the efforts which from time to time have been made to discover this *tertium quid*, — a sort of purgatory between the heaven of perfect freedom and the hell of perfect despotism. But there is in truth no medium. The two extremes are alone consistent, — and, so far as that goes, both are equally so. All intermediate systems are absurd and inconsistent; they are examples, every one of them, of unstable equilibrium, — the slightest breath of wind suffices to throw them down. The old system is at least a strong-looking symmetrical fabric, cemented though it be with blood from the foundation-stone to the topmost pinnacle. The system which says, "You shall be of my religion, or at all events *pretend* you are, whether you be or not; therefore bethink you betimes whether you love truth more than you dread the rack, or if need be, more than burning fagots or molten lead," — is at least perfectly intelligible and consistent, however hideous.

This is an iron-hearted, brazen-faced Devil enough, and one has some involuntary, shuddering awe of him. How far the petty imps who aspire to share his guilt, but dare not emulate such sublimity of wickedness, are entitled to respect of any kind, we shall presently see.

Some of the most obvious modifications by which the unqualified system of persecution might be stripped of its more revolting features, suggested themselves to the anonymous writer * who undertook the perilous task of answering Locke's first letter on Toleration; and indeed were anticipated by Bayle in that part of his "Philosophical Commentary," where he examines, with deliberate and minute attention, the "objections" to his principles. First, Locke's adversary declared that it was far from his purpose to undertake the defence of the horrid cruelties by which history is disfigured. No, — it was only "moderate penalties" and "convenient punishments" for which he pleaded! Now here — not to insist that almost all the arguments above stated against the most unqualified system, apply with unabated force to this and every modification of it — we come at once to the first of those symptoms of instability, which, as we have said, characterize the whole. What are "moderate penalties" and "gentle punishments"? Hanging is moderate compared with burning, and branding gentle compared with the rack. To some men of squeamish sensibility, even the cropping of the ears, the free use of the scourge, a few years' imprisonment or banishment, might foolishly be considered excessive. Nay, we know not whether there might not be found some who would object to ruin men even by regular process of law, by quirks and quibbles, — perhaps, even to the pillory, fines, confiscation; while there might be others (as there undoubtedly have been many), who would say of all heretics, that "hanging is too good for them"; and who would not

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* We learn from Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," that the author was Jonas Proast, of Queen's College, *Oxford.*

only show their charity by sending them, if obstinate, to perdition, but that, too, by methods which should convince them that they did not lose much by exchanging earth for hell.

It has been already remarked, that our modern champion of persecution, who "confesses a satisfaction" (we admire the felicity no less than the honesty of the phrase) "in the infliction of penalties" for change of opinion, has left this matter equally in the dark. For this he is not to be blamed; it was impossible for him to assign limits, and he has therefore wisely refrained from attempting it. Whether a fine of a hundred pounds be thought equivalent to the luxury of a new opinion, — whether such a *bonne bouche* ought to go still higher, — whether it be dear at imprisonment, confiscation, banishment, — whether his clemency would be "satisfied" with the stocks, or the pillory, or branding, — or whether he would "confess a satisfaction" (in very obstinate cases) at hanging or burning, is all unhappily matter of conjecture.

Locke's adversary further modified the system, by declaring that the "moderate penalties" and the "convenient punishment" for which he contended, were not designed to compel those on whom they were inflicted to adopt a particular form of religion at the option of the magistrate; but to induce them to "examine," to "consider," calmly and deliberately, that they might not, as too often happens, be led by passion or caprice, or any other motive which ought to have no influence in the determination of the question! Whereupon he was asked whether he considered the *fear* of torture or banishment, and the *hope* of recompense or impunity, amongst the passions? Whether he seriously thought that the rack or the thumbscrew would *favor* that calm and equal consideration which he was so charitably desirous of promoting? Whether a man under the pangs of torture, or the dread of confiscation or banishment, is in a better condition for the exercise of his logic? Whether the mind, under such discipline, would not be as effectually under a sinister bias, as if left to the dominion of any other passions whatsoever? Whether the author would have this charitable expression of concern for the souls of men fairly applied to all who, it might be deemed, had *not* given the subject of religion "an equal and conscientious examination"; and, amongst the rest, to the multitudes of "inconsiderate professors" of the natural religion, who, as they are often more liable to take their religion on trust and in haste, than those who must suffer something for it, stand in more urgent need of such a provocative to deliberation? Whether, if he replied in the negative, "his remedy would not resemble the helleboraster that grew in the woman's garden for the cure of worms in her neighbors' children, for that it wrought too roughly to give it to any of her own"? * Whether it could be thought that the magistrate who had established a given religion, or the clergy who preached it, would tolerate such an impartial application of the system of "moderate and convenient penalties" to those of their own communion, however little they may have "examined"? Whether the plan had ever been acted upon, or was ever likely to be? Whether it would not be a most curious and unprecedented act of legislation, to inflict penalties with the vague object of making people "examine" whether they are in the right or not: or, rather, with the still more vague object of making them "seek truth" till they find it, in the absence of a judge to determine what that truth is? Whether it would not be very much like "whipping a scholar to make him find out the square root of a number you do not know"? Whether he who declares he has examined, and is still of the same mind, and that *not* the mind of a conformist, is to be released from all further punishment? or whether public officials are to be appointed to "examine" whether he has "examined" enough? Whether these are to be satisfied that he has examined enough, or are likely to be so, till he has "examined" himself into the state of mind which will induce him to conform? and whether, if they are not to be satisfied till then, this system of "moderate penalties" does not, after all, resolve itself into the system of compelling men to conform to the religion of the magistrate? There are some things in the extract from that modern writer on whom we have been animadverting, which remind one of this system: "Penalties bring home to a man his own responsibility," — "they are a memento to him of a great moral law, and warn him that his private judgment, if not a duty, is a sin." "If persons have strong feelings, they should pay for them; if they think it a duty to unsettle things established, they should show their earnestness by being willing to suffer." Here one would think that the charitable object, like that of Locke's antagonist, was to secure conscientiousness and deliberation on the part of the sufferers for supposed truth, or to sublime their virtues into heroism. But we have already shown, and the former part of the paragraph indeed avows it, that it is for the sake of peace and quietness — on behalf of the "established opinions" — that he chiefly desires these penalties to be inflicted.

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* Locke's "Second Letter." Works, Vol. V. p. 99.

Locke's adversary subsequently shuffled out of his original position, and affirmed that magistrates were at liberty to persecute only for the true religion; and that it was at their peril if they indulged in any eccentricities of the kind in favor of any false religion. Locke, of course, unmercifully exposes this childish fallacy. For who is to be the judge of truth but the magistrate himself? And, if it be his duty to enforce obedience to *some* religion, he must of course enforce obedience to that which he deems true.

Even after the general principles of toleration were established, it was long before the spirit of persecution was quite subdued; indeed, as we all know, it was only within the last few years that our statutes were purged from the last traces of it. Men found out, it seems, after the more violent forms of persecution were abandoned, that it was still very proper to visit those who did not conform to the religion of the magistrate, with the privation of some of their civil rights! This was no *punishment*, it was simply a *negation*. Ingenious phraseology! To be kept without a thing is something very different from having something taken away from us, and what a man never had, of course he can never much miss; and thus, by this subtle distinction of "negations," men managed to gratify their bigotry and to cloak their absurdity at the same time. Happily we have got beyond this also.

The writer who has detained us so long is, so far as we know, almost alone in the frank and explicit confession of his preference for the antiquated system of persecution; a solitary champion of the "suppression" of the "Right of Private Judgment" by "pains and penalties." But there are not a few who would attempt to limit its exercise by an appeal to human authority; though they would not advocate the employment of violence for that purpose. It must be confessed that this system is better than that of force, just upon the principle, that he who simply steals is less guilty than he who commits both theft and murder. But the system itself is far less compact and consistent. If man be rightfully accountable to his fellows for the formation or expression of his religious opinions, — if he *ought* to adopt those which he is *told* to adopt, — one would imagine it but reasonable to arm authority with some means of enforcing its mandates. The duty of submission to any human authority, would seem to imply the correlative right of visiting disobedience with some sort of penalties. If not, it is authority only in name. What should we say to a legislator, who, enacting certain laws, should set forth in the preamble, that they were binding only on those who chose to be bound by them, and that those who did not might throw them into the fire? It reminds us of the humorous case cited by Pelisson in his controversy with Leibnitz.* An "inconstant lover" and his "volatile mistress" gravely lay down the laws which are to regulate their courtship, and the last of them is, that both should break any of them they thought proper. South, consistently arguing on *his* principles, that ecclesiastical authority ought to be backed by "temporal power," anticipated and rebuked the inconsistency of all half-hearted apologists for the suppression of conscience. He ridiculed the idea of authority without coercion, — of laws without penalties, — of obligations to obey conjoined with liberty to rebel. He consistently preferred persecution to the sanction of so singular a freedom; and exposes the fallacy in his own ludicrous manner. "Some," he says, "will by no means allow the Church any further power than only to exhort and advise; and this but with a proviso too, that it extends not to such as think themselves too wise and too great to be advised; according to the hypothesis of which persons, the authority of the Church, and the obliging force of all Church-sanctions, can bespeak men only thus: These and these things it is your duty to do, and if you will not do them, you may as well let them alone." *

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* "Je n'ose faire une comparaison trop peu sérieuse, et prise de ces lectures frivoles, qui ont amusé mon enfance; mais je ne sçaurois pourtant m'empêcher d'y penser. Dans une de nos Fables Françoises, (l'ingé-

But whether it be that the enemies of religious freedom despair of reviving the ancient opinions, or think that there is little present chance of success, or are really weary of them, it is certain that, while there is no lack of theories by which the "Right of Private Judgment" is virtually denied or curiously circumscribed, few, like the author on whose fanatical extravagances we have been commenting, would choose to "confess a satisfaction, when a penalty is attached to the expression of new doctrines, or to a change of communion." Nay, as will shortly be seen, even *he*, in despair, we suppose, of getting mankind to adopt his antiquated opinions, provides, in condescension to their infirmities and ignorance, a mode

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nieux roman de *Monsieur D'Urfé*, que tous le monde connoit,) l'amant inconstant et la maitresse volage font avec grand soin les loix de leur amitié ; mais la dernière de toutes est qu'on n'en observera pas une, si l'on ne veut." — Leibnitzii *Opera*, Tom. I. p. 689.

* South's "Sermons," Vol. I. p. 132.

of exercising the right, which, as he flatters himself, will still get rid of all its principal inconveniences. This, and some other theories, we shall now briefly examine, and shall show of them all that they are absolutely nugatory, inasmuch as they still leave, for the decision of "private judgment," questions as difficult and perplexing as those which, according to the common theory, are submitted to it; or, what is worse, that they enjoin, in obedience to an authority neither *claiming* nor *admitted* to be infallible, a deliberate violation of the law of conscience, where the actual convictions of the individual are at variance with that authority; or, lastly, that they are chargeable on both these counts.

Nothing, indeed, short of the Popish doctrine of the Church's infallibility, will effectually limit the "Right of Private Judgment." Even that cannot annul it. For there will still be left *one* unhappy question for its decision; namely, whether the docile soul may unhesitatingly surrender it, and receive the assurances of its guide that the said guide is truly infallible. Still the Romish doctrine does reduce the right to a *minimum* of activity. For though we Protestants, who deny that doctrine, know very well that the "variations of Romanism" have been nearly, if not quite, as numerous as those which Bossuet charged upon Protestantism, and many of them on points quite as important as those which the Church professes to have definitely settled; — though we know that Popes have been opposed to Popes, and Councils to Councils; that Popes have contradicted Councils, and Councils contradicted Popes; — though there have been infinite disputes as to where the infallibility resides, what are the doctrines it has definitely pronounced true, and who to the *individual* is the infallible expounder of what is thus infallibly pronounced infallible; — yet he who receives this doctrine in its integrity has nothing more to do than to eject his reason, sublime his faith into credulity, and reduce his creed to these two comprehensive articles: "I believe whatsoever the Church believes"; — "I believe that the Church believes whatsoever my father-confessor believes that she believes." For thus he reasons: Nothing is more certain than that whatsoever God says is infallibly true; it is infallibly true that the Church says just what God says; it is infallibly true that what the Church says is known; and it is also infallibly true that my father-confessor, or the parson of the next parish, is an infallible expositor of what is thus infallibly known to be the Church's infallible belief, of what God has declared to be infallibly true. If any one of the links, even the last, in this strange *sorites*, be supposed unsound, — if it be not true that the priest is an infallible expounder to the individual of the Church's infallibility, — if his judgment be only his "private judgment," — we come back at once to the perplexities of the common theory of private judgment; and the question then submitted to the individual Romanist's "private judgment" is, whether it be reasonable in him, in a matter of which he knows nothing, but which is yet of infinite moment, to surrender *his* private judgment to that of another man. And truly, to decide a question without having any data for deciding it, appears to us quite as difficult a problem as any of those which are ordinarily submitted to "private judgment." The system, therefore, must be received in its integrity, and if so, the rule of conduct is very simple. If the priest tells us that bread is flesh, and wine is blood, — that the sun revolves round the earth, — that Gulliver's Travels, if they had not been written by a heretic, *would* have been as true as the Gospel, — all we have to do is to believe it, and, if need be, to believe it even for Tertullian's paradoxical reason, "*because* it is impossible."

Of every other mode of nullifying or circumscribing the right of judgment, and of this too, except where the claim of infallibility is not merely *made*, but *admitted*, it may be shown, as already said, that it is either nugatory, or flagitious, or both.

Conscious of this, there is a small party of hybrid Protestants amongst us, who virtually claim for some church unknown — neither the Church of Rome nor the Church of England, and yet both, but certainly *not* the Church of Scotland; some "Visible Church," which is not to be seen; some "Catholic Church," which excludes all Christians except Episcopalians; some "Undivided Church," which embraces the communions of the reciprocally excommunicated; some "Primitive Church" of uncertain date — nothing less than the infallibility, and consequent authority, of the Church of Rome. But they are "born out of due time"; their infallibility comes too late to enable them by its means to limit the "Right of Private Judgment," or relieve us of our perplexities. For unhappily the Church of Rome has got the start of them; there are, therefore, *rival* claims to infallibility; and consequently, if more could be said to reconcile the manifold contradictions of the theory of these men, and to authenticate their claims to be its expositors, than ever *can* be said, "private judgment" would still be pressed with the most transcendently perplexing question ever submitted to the arbitration of ignorance, — "Of two claimants to infallibility, which is the more likely to be infallible?" — But to resume the modern theories.

The writer, on whose appetite for persecution we have been constrained to animadvert, is not, it appears, disposed, after all, to deny the *free* exercise of "private judgment," but merely to limit the *range* of its inquiries; — that is, the bird may freely range *in its cage;* nevertheless, we shall show that even there it has room to lose itself. He has discovered, it seems, that the question which "private judgment" is called to decide is, "Who is the teacher we are to follow? not, What are the doctrines we are to believe?" The "precedents" in Scripture, he affirms, "sanction not an inquiry about Gospel doctrine, but about the Gospel teacher; not what has God revealed, but whom has he commissioned?" He maintains "that the private student of Scripture would not ordinarily gain a knowledge of the Gospel from it"! Once more, he says, "The New Testament, equally with the Old, as far as it speaks of examination into doctrines professedly from heaven, makes their teachers the subject of that inquiry, and not their matter." . . . . . "Let it be observed how exactly this view of the province of private judgment, *where it is allowable*, as being the discovery, not of doctrine, but of the teachers of doctrine, coincides both with the nature of religion and the state of human society as we find it." We have already had a notable specimen of the exegetical talents of this writer, and need not, therefore, be surprised at his professing to find Scripture proof of this doctrine also. It must be confessed, however, that his method is somewhat novel, and would be generally imagined equally opposed to criticism and to logic. He seems to think he has made out his point, if he but proves that teachers are *promised* in Scripture, and that it *is* within the province of private judgment to decide on their credentials. We deny neither. "In remarkable coincidence," says he, "with this view, we find in both Testaments that teachers are promised under the dispensation of the Gospel"! Might we not just as logically say, that, "in remarkable coincidence with *our* views," we find it written that "there was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job"? What is all this to the purpose? Who denies that religious teachers are promised? As little do we deny that it is the right of individuals to *judge* of their pretensions and credentials. But does the right terminate there? that is the question. One would imagine that the commendation bestowed on the Bereans, for searching the Scriptures to see "whether the things told them" by Paul "were so," would be alone sufficient to decide this point. But no, — our author expressly says, though he attempts not to prove it, that *this*, too, is "amongst the precedents which sanction not an inquiry about Gospel doctrine, but about the Gospel teacher"!

Let it be ruled so, then. And now to consider the system itself. It may well be maintained that the question thus submitted to "private judgment," is as difficult as any which are ordinarily submitted to it. If a man be incompetent for the latter, he is equally incompetent for the former. The reasoning is about as good as would be that of a father who should say to his child, "Though it is true you are not competent to say what it is fit for you to learn, and, therefore, cannot select for yourself a *school*, yet you are perfectly welcome to choose your *schoolmaster*." We repeat, that if this exercise of judgment is to be a *bonâ fide* exercise of judgment at all, it will not be a whit less difficult to decide upon the "teacher," than upon the "general doctrines to be taught." "Nay," says our author, "it is much more easy to judge of persons than of opinions." True, — so far as regards their moral qualities; whether they be, in effect, virtuous or dissolute, benevolent or selfish, humane or cruel. But then, unhappily, if this be the criterion, it is just none at all; for men characterized by both classes of qualities are to be found in all communions. And, as it is most evident from this fact that their personal qualities would be no sufficient guide, so it is by no means the criterion which our author contemplates; he would be very sorry to have it impartially applied. They are quite other qualities which are to decide the point; and the inquiry into these, we contend, is either not separable from an inquiry into the truth of the very doctrines taught, but presupposes that inquiry to have been both instituted and decided; or it is an inquiry into matters still more difficult and perplexing; — for example, whether or not the clergy of a given church possess the inestimable advantages of "Apostolical succession." In the present divided state of Christendom, which, it may be asked, is the more hopeful inquiry for a private individual, — "What saith the Scripture?" *or*, "Which of all the religious teachers who claim my attention makes the most rightful pretensions to instruct me in the truth, — I, at the same time, neither inquiring, nor being permitted to inquire, *what* that truth is?" For it must be remembered that an Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Independent, Calvinist, or Arminian, is not a trustworthy teacher, *because* he tells us he is; the awful privilege of "Apostolical succession" is not inscribed on the bishop's forehead; no voice from heaven certifies to us that those whom he ordains are exclusively commissioned to preach the Gospel. We repeat, therefore, that this liberty of "private judgment," if really acted upon, implies a task quite as difficult as that for which it is substituted: in a word, either the very *same*,—that of examining the pretensions of the teacher by a reference to his doctrines; or that of deciding on the historic grounds of his authority, without any investigation of his doctrine at all. This method, therefore, would not serve the purpose for which it has been invented; it would not correct the eccentricities or diminish the varieties of "private judgment." Nay, we have already facts in abundance to prove this. We see that there are multitudes of *all* communions who select their teacher on no wiser principle than that here advocated; without any inquiry into the truth of the doctrines taught, or the teacher's claim to the authority he assumes. It were well both for them and for truth, if they would exercise also the other and better part of the "Right of Private Judgment," and diligently inquire, whether the system of doctrines taught them is in general accordance with truth, and the claims to authority, on the teacher's part, well founded. It does not appear, then, that this limitation of the "Right of Private Judgment" would diminish the diversities of sect and party, or secure a nearer approximation to uniformity.*

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* It is true that this writer points out some concise methods of limiting the candidates for the inquirer's suffrage. "You may reject," says he, "all who do not even profess to come with authority." To this it may be replied, first, that there are none who come to teach without professing authority to do so, and that in general, the more extravagant their doctrine, the more arrogant their pretensions; and secondly, that the *absence* of those exclusive pretensions to which *he* refers — pretensions to the Apostolical Succession — would be to thousands a reason rather for admitting than rejecting the claims of a teacher who came to them with such unwonted humility. But even according to this writer, there are

But one of the most singular oversights is, that our author formally concedes the right in its full extent, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not it is to be so conceded. "We have arrived," he says, with great solemnity and gravity, "at the following conclusion, that it is our duty to betake ourselves to Scripture, and to observe how far the private search of a religion is there sanctioned, and under what circumstances"! We are, it appears, in the first instance, to make the most extensive use of our "Right of Private Judgment" on the Scriptures, in order to ascertain whether or not we are at liberty to use our "private judgment" in interpreting its doctrines; in other words, we are to exercise our "private judgment" to ascertain whether or not it ought to be exercised!

Another modification of the theory of "private judgment"

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at least three churches, which, however divided on points which multitudes deem essential, possess, it seems, all that *authority* which is necessary to give validity to the claims of their teachers. These churches — *risum teneatis?* — are the Romish, Greek, and Anglican! But how is the perplexed inquirer to decide on their claims? Very easily, if we fairly follow out this writer's principles; for, partly by what he has said, and partly by what he has left us to infer, it does not much matter to which church of the three a man belongs; and as each is possessed of those mysterious "gifts," depending on the "Succession," which will serve to countervail any corruptions, it is difficult to say whether there are any reasons sufficient to justify a man in leaving any one of them for another. It is true, indeed, that our author disclaims all intention of discussing the question, as to whether there are reasons which can justify the Catholic in leaving his own communion; but it is plain, from what he has said, how he would decide it, and how, if consistent with his principles, he *must* decide it. Indeed, his very making it a *question* is a sufficient indication of his sentiments; for did ever *Protestant* before doubt whether it was lawful for a Catholic to leave the Church of Rome? None, assuredly, can doubt it, except those strange Protestants who deplore Protestantism itself, and who use their utmost efforts to show how much the Churches of Rome and England resemble one another! That the difference between them is not, in his estimation, very great, we may infer from such language as this: "We may believe that our own church has certain imperfections; the Church of Rome certain corruptions; such a is that of Mr. Gladstone. He says: "And, lastly, persons are in great alarm for their private judgment. The true doctrine of private judgment is, as has been shown by many writers, most important and most sacred; it has the direct sanction of Scripture. It teaches the duty, and, as correlative to the duty, the right, of a man to assent freely and rationally to the truth. It is commonly called a right to inquire; but it is to inquire for the purpose of assenting; for he has no right (that is, none as before God) to reject the truth after his inquiry. It is a right to assent to truth, — to inquire into alleged truth. Now, all that the true idea of the Church proposes to him is a probable and authorized guide. This is wholly distinct from the Romish infallibility. The Church of England holds individual freedom in things spiritual to be an essential attribute of man's true nature, and an essential condition of

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belief has no tendency to lead us to any view as to which, *on the whole*, is the better, or to induce or *warrant* us to leave the one communion for the other." Again: "Is it not certain, even at first sight, that each of these branches (Romish, Greek, and English) has many high gifts and much grace in her communion?" Now, whether this representation be correct or not, let theologians decide; but so far from "its being evident at first sight," it is certain that nine tenths in each of these communions would, in the exercise of that "Right of Private Judgment" which even he concedes, come to a different conclusion, as to who are "divinely appointed teachers," from himself. Such is the very first application of this new theory of "private judgment," designed to limit the diversities of opinion; its very inventor manages to stumble on a "judgment," in which not ten out of a hundred will agree with him! On the manifold inconsistencies into which he is plunged by his attempt to show how nearly these churches approximate, and yet to find such still subsisting differences as may justify a state of separation, — conceding that Rome does *not* practise idolatry, and yet discovering that there is a *note* of idolatry upon her, which may justify him who is already a Protestant in not joining her, — maintaining that his own church is *not* schismatic, and yet acknowledging that it is chargeable with something very *like* schism; and leaving us to infer that the Reformers ought never to have separated from the Church of Rome, — of all this we shall say nothing, because it has nothing to do with our present subject. But as a specimen of what may be called *seesaw* logic, it is well worth reading.

the right reception of the Gospel; and testifies to that sentiment in the most emphatic mode, by encouraging the fullest communication of Scripture to the people. Yet is it perfectly possible that the best use of such a freedom may often be thus exemplified; when a man, having prayed for light from God, and having striven to live in the spirit of his prayer, and yet finding his own opinion upon a point of doctrine opposite to that of the universal, undivided Church, recognizes the answer to his prayer and the guide to his mind in the declarations of the creeds, rather than in his own single, and perhaps recent, impressions upon the subject; not thus surrendering his own liberty of judgment, but using it in order to weigh and compare the probabilities of his or the Church's correctness respectively, and acting faithfully on the result."

Here, first, we have the old fallacy. "Private judgment" is, indeed, a *right;* but it is a right of assenting to the *truth.* But, then, who is to be the judge of truth? Is the individual conscience to assent to that which it honestly deems truth, or is it not? If the former, we are just in the same predicament as before. If not, what is the authority which is to justify it in setting its conviction at defiance? "Why," replies Mr. Gladstone, "the voice of the undivided Church" must decide the matter. To this we might content ourselves with replying: This "undivided Church," amidst the ten thousand parties into which Christendom is divided, we cannot find at all; and the search is at least as difficult as that of the truth which we are to find by its means. It is like telling us that we are to learn which of five hundred opinions is the true, by inquiring of some inhabitant of Utopia. But the concluding sentence of this paragraph deserves more serious animadversion. Our author proposes an expedient for tranquillizing a scrupulous conscience, — a conscience which finds its decisions at hopeless variance with those of the "undivided Church," — which is (though he doubtless meant it not) an outrage on morality. It is really one of the most extraordinary pieces of casuistry we have ever met with, either in ancient or modern times, and directly justifies the suppression of the voice of conscience. We are to suppose, for argument's sake, that the inquirer has found that nonenity, — the "undivided Church." Be it so; but he finds, at the same time, that this "undivided Church" teaches a doctrine as true which he is persuaded is erroneous; and enjoins rites as a duty, the performance of which he believes to be sin. What is he to do? Is he at liberty to profess his acquiescence in that doctrine though he believes it false, or to perform those rites though he believes them wrong? "Pray over the matter, and inquire," says Mr. Gladstone. "I have done both," replies the unhappy man. "And you are still of the same mind?" "Altogether." "But do you not think the whole undivided Church more likely to be in the to affirm the contrary." "Then you may, without further right than you?" "I am not so destitute of modesty as scruple, proclaim your belief in the supposed error, and practise the forbidden rite!" So thus, it appears, the man may assent to *one* proposition which he deems *false*, because he can assent to another, altogether different, which he believes true; namely, that he thinks the "undivided Church" more likely to be in the right than he. How different the decision of Mr. Gladstone from that of Saint Paul, who declares that a man who should eat meat offered to idols, with a conscience doubting its propriety, would sin; though the Apostle at the same time declares by inspiration, that the act, in itself, is absolutely indifferent. Such a casuist as Mr. Gladstone would soon have administered relief. "Do you not think," he would say, "that an inspired Apostle is more likely to be in the right than you?" "Who can doubt it?" would have been the reply. "Then eat as soon and as much as you please," Mr. Gladstone would have said; unless he believed the decision of an inspired Apostle less likely to be the true one than that of his "undivided Church."

We are astonished at this doctrine, we confess, and doubt whether, considering the difference of the age and circumstances, any thing much more censurable is to be found even among those Jesuitical casuists, whose extravagances Pascal so inimitably ridiculed. Mr. Gladstone's doctrine of "probable opinions" would almost match that of the school of Loyola; and we are half inclined to say of him, what Pascal's Jesuit Father says of Escobar: "Truly this Escobar," said I, "is a fine man." "O," rejoined the Father, "every body admires him; he puts such *lovely* questions!" *

But what Mr. Gladstone, with congenial love of obscurity, has left in utter darkness, others have endeavored to clear up. They have proceeded to furnish us with *criteria* of the undivided Church, to interpret what it has delivered, and to invest its decisions with a species of infallibility. But let it not be for one moment imagined that we are at all likely to have the exercise of the "Right of Private Judgment" diminished by all this; on the contrary, it is enlarged a thousandfold. The theory is, that Scripture is incomplete; that some things are divinely revealed which are not revealed *there;* that it is to be supplemented by tradition; and that whatever we find unanimously and constantly asserted by such tradition, is invested with an authority coördinate with that of Scripture. Whereupon arise an infinity of questions, any one of which is as difficult as any that private judgment was ever called upon to decide; questions, which he who is no scholar has little chance of deciding, except by lot, for the authorities are very numerous and diametrically contradictory on all sides. "Nothing is more easy," exclaims the Anglican; "all you have to do is to adhere to the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis,—*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus traditum est.*"

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* "Vraiment, lui dis-je, il me semble que je rêve, quand j'entends des Religieux parler de cette sorte. Et quoi, mon père, dites moi en conscience, êtes vous dans ce sentiment-là? Non vraiment, me dit le père. Vous parlez donc, continuai-je, contre votre conscience? Point de tout, dit-il. Je ne parlois pas en cela selon ma conscience, mais selon celle de Ponce et du P. Bauny; et vous pourriez les suivre en sureté, car ce sont d'habiles gens."—*Let. Provinciales*, Let. V.

But alas! on investigation, it is found that "nobody" knows what "every body" has said; that what has been affirmed "everywhere" is remembered "nowhere"; and that the only thing to which all time has testified is *tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.* Whether a man be learned or ignorant, — permitted to exercise his judgment in discovering these obscured verities of tradition for himself, or forbidden so to do, — ample in either case is the scope for his private judgment. If learned, and permitted to inquire, the luckless student finds that, instead of one small book, he is sent to five hundred; instead of having to deal with nothing but what is *truth*, truth itself is presented to him in minute fragments, amidst mountain-loads of absurdity, ignorance, and heresy. Then there are, besides, most difficult and subtle questions of criticism to be decided, before the very materials of judgment can be laid before the mind; interpolations, erasures, forgeries to be detected, — what is authentic separated from what is not, — in a word, *quæstiones vexatæ* without end to be adjusted. Again; at what point is the investigation to stop? Is it at the end of the second, or third, or fourth, or fifth centuries? "Stand by the first six General Councils," exclaim Hammond and Stillingfleet. "Stop at the end of the fifth century," says Archbishop Bramhall. "You must not draw bridle till the disunion of the East and West," cries Bishop Ken. "You are wrong," says Archbishop Usher; "four *or* five hundred years are sufficient." "Rather three *or* four," say Waterland and Beveridge. "The precise limit is *nowhere*," says Mr. Newman; "it is a question of degree and place." "It is everywhere," shouts the more consistent Romanist. No wonder that, oppressed with the thought of *such* an exercise of the right of private judgment, the inquirer declares he knows not how to perform it. "My friend," is the reply, "you have only to read through about a hundred and fifty folios of ecclesiastical records, and you will find the matter is just as I tell you." He feels that this is but meagre consolation, and, if intelligent, will declare, that, rather than undergo such labor for the small *residuum* of doubtful truth which he is assured he will extract from it, he would make a voyage to the Indies to bring home a cargo of one peppercorn and two grains of rice! The right of private judgment, in such a case, he feels to be about as valuable a possession as a right to read through the statutes at large. The Tractarians may very safely grant it, for they may be assured no one will avail himself of it. If the man be ignorant, or forbidden to inquire, — the other case supposed, — he has only to believe. But let it not be imagined that he is not still subjected to the necessity of performing an impracticable act of private judgment. He may be told that infallible truth has been discovered, and that the priest is the infallible expounder of it. But, then, on what ground shall he believe this? "I am commissioned," says the priest. "But," will be the reply, "I see that there are multitudes of your *own* church, and whom you acknowledge *equally* commissioned with yourself, who tell me that you are under an absolute delusion, — that neither you nor they are commissioned to assume any such authority, — that tradition is no authoritative guide, and that, if it were, what it authorizes cannot be authentically discovered. I moreover see that many of those who adopt the same general principles with yourself, differ as to *what* is primitive and catholic truth. I can, therefore, regard *your* judgment only as your 'private judgment'; and the knotty question which I have to decide is, whether I am to surrender *my* 'private judgment' because *your* 'private judgment' tells me to do so, when the 'private judgment' of others, equally learned, equally sincere, and equally *commissioned*, tells me that I ought not? and, as I have no data whereon to decide this question, truly I think a harder question for my private judgment, even the Scriptures of truth could scarcely have submitted to it. If I decide as you would have me, I decide absolutely without any reason whatever." "And is not this," would be the *honest* reply, "is not this the happy state of mind to which we have been endeavoring to reduce you? Have we not for years been urging you to *inquire* whether *inquiry* be not dangerous? — have we not been reasoning you (in our way) into the belief that *reasoning* on such subjects is *unreasonable*? And have we not endeavored to illustrate precept by example, and as completely divested ourselves of all the attributes of a rational nature, as the ancient caricature of Plato's man? Have we not shown you, in our own case, how much may be believed, and how little it is necessary to reason?" *

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* As these remarks may appear severe, we shall justify ourselves by citing the following paragraphs from one of the most elaborate and dangerous of the *Oxford Tracts*. If the reader find it impossible to read the first without a smile, we predict that he will not be able to read the second without a sigh; — to think that a reasonable being can talk such nonsense. "I am not here to enter into the question of the grounds on which the duty and blessedness of believing rests; but I would observe, that nature certainly does give sentence against scepticism, against doubt, nay, against a habit (I say a *habit*) of inquiry, — against a critical, cold, *investigating* temper, — the temper of what are called shrewd, clear-headed, hard-headed men; in that, by the confession of all, happiness is attached, not to *their* temper, but rather to confiding, *unreasoning* faith. I do not say that inquiry may not, under circumstances, be a duty, as going into the cold and rain may be a duty instead of stopping at home; as serving in war may be a duty; but it does seem to me preposterous to confess, that free inquiry leads to scepticism, and scepticism makes one less happy than faith, and yet *that such free inquiry is right.* What is right and what is happy cannot, in the long run and on a large scale, be disjoined. To follow truth can never be a subject of regret; *free inquiry does lead a man to regret the days of his childlike faith;* — THEREFORE *it is not following truth.* Those who measure every thing by utility should, on their own principles, embrace the obedience of faith for its very expedience; and they should cease this kind of seeking, that they may find.

"*I say, then, that never to have been troubled with a doubt about the truth of what has been taught us, is the happiest state of mind;* and if any one says, that to maintain this is to admit that heretics ought to remain heretics, and pagans pagans, I deny it. For I have not said that it is a happy thing never to *add* to what you have learned, but not happier to *take away*. Now, true religion is the summit and perfection of false religions; it combines in one whatever there is of good and true separately remaining in each." . . . . . "So that, in matter of fact, if a religious mind were educated in, and sincerely attached to, some form of heathenism or

That we are to receive with cringing acquiescence whatever such men are pleased to say they are commissioned to teach us, will be more than doubted, till they not only lay claim to virtual infallibility, but persuade us to admit their

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heresy, and then were brought under the light of truth, it would be drawn off from error into the truth, not by losing what it had, but by gaining what it had not, — not by being unclothed, but by being 'clothed upon,' 'that mortality may be swallowed up of life.' That same principle of faith which attaches it to its original wrong doctrine, would attach it to the truth; and that portion of its original doctrine which was to be cast off as absolutely false, would not be directly rejected, but indirectly rejected in the reception of the truth which is its opposite."

The writer of this seriously believes that unthinking acquiescence in whatever we are told, is the most desirable state of mind; and that the restlessness produced by inquiry affords a presumption, that what is offered to us is error. The Hottentot, who is contented with his brutal theology, had better, it seems, view with suspicion the *uneasiness* of mind produced by the teachers of Christianity, for they only disturb his faith and tranquillity, — an ominous sign that he is "not following the truth"! "Where ignorance is bliss, 't is folly to be wise." "Not so," says this profound doctor, "for I have not said that he is not to *add* to his belief, only he must be careful not to *take* away; he must become a Christian, not by *losing what he had*, but by *gaining what he had not!*" Was ever fatuity like this? The Hottentot, when he embraces Christianity, it appears, only *adds* to his faith, but does not *take* any away! Are we to believe that, if these new evangelists were to attempt the conversion of the heathen, they would act on the above maxims, and facilitate the work, as did the Romish missionaries among the Japanese, by teaching their converts to transfer their whole idolatrous stock in trade to Christianity, — to make over to the saints the homage they once paid to idols, and baptize their wooden gods by evangelical names? What must be the desperation of a cause which stands in need of such arguments? Arguments! they do not even reach the respectability of sophistry. Are we not justified, then, in saying that these new teachers enjoin a servile and unreasoning belief, — the utter prostration of the intellect? And does not such a paragraph as the above, prove that what they teach they are full willing to practise? The reader will find the same lesson perpetually inculcated, with various degrees of effrontery, throughout the *Oxford Tracts*. According to these men, one would think that it was so much a duty to distrust our reason, that mystery is an antecedent ground of probability; and that, if a doctrine be absolutely incomprehensible, it is almost certain to be true!

claim. The latter they will do when they have perfected us in the grand art of abjuring our reason ; in the former they seem ready to accommodate us at any time. But unhappily for their pretensions, though happily for truth, their virtual claim to infallibility and unquestioning obedience is not, like that of Rome, unanimously and vigorously supported by the whole communion to which they belong. Even if it were, such unity would not (as already shown) relieve the difficulties of the inquirer; for as another church makes the same pretensions, the knotty query would still return, " Of two churches, both professing infallibility, which is the more likely to be infallible ? "

But such unanimity of pretensions, whether it be of any avail or not, is not to be found. " *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes ?* " The disease of " Private Judgment " has infected the shepherds as well as the flock ; all the difficulties which, as we have shown, so closely beset the private student in the attempt to collect Catholic truth fromthe voluminous records of antiquity, have been felt by these authorized guides themselves ; and have led to all those varieties of opinion which might have been expected. In this point of view, the recent attempt at producing unity of opinion, and abridging the diversities of " private judgment," is even ludicrous. Never, since the Reformation, has there been such a din of controversy ; — such a hubbub of tumultuous and discordant voices. Ill-fated project of universal concord, which terminates in the indefinite multiplication of controversies ! It really reminds one of the ambitious attempt, described in the " Sketch-Book," at a new and elaborate harmony on the part of Master Simon and his village choristers. " The usual services of the choir," says the author, " were managed pretty well, ... but the great trial was an anthem that had been prepared and arranged by Master Simon, and on which he had founded great expectations. Unluckily there was a blunder at the very outset ; the musicians became flurried ; Master Simon was in a fever ; every thing went on lamely and irregularly, until they came to a chorus beginning, 'Now let us sing with one accord,' which seemed to be a signal for parting company, and all became discord and confusion." Even thus is it on the present occasion; our very ears ache with the elaborate dissonance of this novel attempt at harmony.

There is one point, and but one, in which the circumstances attending this alleged attempt to restore "primitive truth" resemble those attending its first establishment; and in *that* we must confess the analogy to be perfect. These new teachers have come, "not to bring peace on the earth, but a sword."

Manifold are the arguments in favor of the "Right of Private Judgment" on which we have not insisted, and on which, at this period of the world's history, it would be most superfluous to dwell. Those, of course, which have been mentioned as demonstrating the wickedness and folly of persecution, are in favor of it, — for whatever tends to prove the one wrong, tends to prove the other right. To these many more might be added; some deduced from the intellectual and moral nature of man, others from the relations in which he stands to God: some from the declarations of Scripture, others from the examples it holds out to our imitation: some from abstract justice, and others from an enlarged expediency. The arguments on which we have principally insisted are, that the right must *in fact* be conceded, whether we like it or not; that the evils with which it is supposed to be connected, be they greater or less, are not likely to be remedied till we find what we shall be long in seeking, — an infallible interpreter of infallible truth; and that any theory short of that involves a flagitious tampering with the rights of conscience.

On this last argument, which we have already noticed, we should wish to add a remark or two; for this alone would be sufficient to prove the folly of attempting to circumscribe the Right in question. If it be man's duty to embrace the truth; and if it be also his duty, which necessarily follows, to embrace that which he honestly *deems* the truth, he must follow his convictions whithersoever they lead him, in spite of any authority whatsoever not admitted by him to be infallible ; in *that* case, of course, doubt or denial would imply a contradiction of his own convictions. It is not at the option of a conscientious man, — no matter how he came by his conscience, — to debate whether he shall act upon its convictions. He *cannot* do otherwise. Take the case of a man who believes in his conscience that such and such doctrines are false, such and such rites sinful. Right or wrong, this is his state of mind. What is he to do? Can any authorize him to profess that these doctrines are true, or to practise those rites? If any one will answer in the affirmative, he will say more than any casuists, ancient or modern, out of the school of the Jesuits, will expressly affirm. He is bound, then, to yield obedience to the dictates of his conscience, whether his opinions be true or false: if true, even our opponents will not say that he can be authorized to profess the contrary. Nor is it otherwise, supposing them erroneous; for by the express authority of Saint Paul, (who declares that "to him who thinketh any thing evil" it is so, and that even a perfectly indifferent act assumes a moral malignity if performed with a reluctant or accusing conscience,) as well as by the decision of all the best moralists and casuists, an erroneous conscience obliges as much as a well-informed one; and by none is this more strenuously maintained than by the great Divines of the Church of England.*

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* It is asserted by Jeremy Taylor in his "Ductor Dubitantium"; by Barrow in his Latin poem, entitled "Conscientia erronea obligat"; and by Archbishop Sharp, cited by Locke. Stillingfleet says: "The plea of an erroneous conscience takes not off the obligation to follow the dictates of it; for as a man is bound to lay it down supposing it erroneous, so he is bound not to go against it while it is not laid down. . . . . . So that let men turn and shift about which way they will, by the very same arguments that any will prove separation from the Church of Rome lawful, because she requires unlawful things as conditions of her communion, it will be proved lawful not to conform to any suspected or unlawful practice required by any church governors upon the same

The usual evasion is, "Let him further inquire"; and wise counsel this may be, in the first instance. But suppose a person says he has inquired, or that he inquires again, and comes back in the same mind. What is he to do? He will say that he cannot be inquiring for ever, — that religion is a practical thing, and must not be matter of investigation all his days, — that he may as well embrace error as live in a state of continual pyrrhonism, — and that he has no reason to expect that he will ever have a greater moral certainty than he has. Once more, then, we demand, What is he to do? Right or wrong, he must follow the convictions of his conscience, — to him the supreme law.

It is true that, after all, the individual may be much to blame; but not for thus acting in obedience to the dictates of his conscience in the last resort. There may have been haste in the inquiry, — or no inquiry at all when urged to make it, — or unworthy passions and prepossessions in favor of such and such conclusions. In these respects there may be much to blame, but not in the act of obedience to conscience itself. On the other hand, — if, rare case! there has been nothing wanting in the process of inquiry which honesty and diligence could supply, — no negligence, no want of candor or patience, the man is guiltless, even supposing the opinion erroneous, unless we suppose God to punish error absolutely and wholly involuntary. If, then, a man can truly say, "I believe in my conscience such and such religious doctrines are God's truth, and such and such religious usages most pleasing to him," it

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terms; — if the thing so required be, after serious and sober inquiry, judged unwarrantable by a man's own conscience."

"If," says Chillingworth, in his strong manner, "they suffer themselves neither to bee betraid into their errors, nor kept in them by any sin of their will; if they doe their best endeavour to free themselves from all errors, and yet faile of it through humaine frailty; so well am I perswaded of the goodnesse of God, that if in me alone should meet a confluence of all such errors of all the Protestants in the world that were thus qualified, I should not be so much afraid of them all as I should be to ask pardon for them."

is no longer at his option whether he shall profess the one or practise the other; and in like manner, if he can truly say, "I believe in my conscience such and such doctrines are false, and such and such usages displeasing to God," it is not in his power even to *appear* to sanction either. He must obey that which is his law, — his conscience; in other words, if his private judgment be at variance with any *authority whatever*, not admitted to be infallible, he must obey the first and not the second. To this there is no exception.

It is not easy to find men who will avowedly dispute the maxim here laid down. The opponent generally contents himself with daring those who maintain it to apply it to certain extreme cases. We should not shrink from the challenge. We believe that the general principle is universally applicable; and that the instances which seem opposed are either imaginary or irrelevant. Let us take the strongest conceivable cases, which, however absurd, some have been modest and reasonable enough to adduce, — that, for example, of a man who is supposed to be *conscientiously* prompted to commit murder or robbery. "Is the man," they triumphantly ask, "to be justified, and treated as innocent?" To this, the arguments in reply are many and obvious. First, if we are to suppose that such conscientious persons are impelled by conscience to commit murder or robbery *as such*, — that is, under the persuasion of their being crimes, — then, 1. The notion is simply a contradiction. 2. Such a case, so far as we are aware, has never been alleged, and might safely be left to be considered when it occurs. 3. Supposing such a case to be alleged, all mankind would feel constrained, on ordinary calculations of probability, to believe either that the parties were mad, and therefore truly excused on that ground, or that they pretended to hold such a singular creed for an evil purpose. They would, therefore, be either confined as lunatics, or punished as knaves, according to the evidence of their being the one or the other. 4. Whether they be conscientious or not, society must protect every one against any infraction of his civil rights; and, for this reason, the conscientious persons who manifest their piety by infringing them, may be very properly knocked on the head. "The magistrate," says Bayle, with a gravity which is almost amusing, "having received a power from God and man, of putting murderers to death, may justly punish him who kills a man from the instincts of conscience; for it is not his business to stand winnowing those rare and singular cases, in which conscience may happen to fall into illusions in this matter." But, secondly, if by those who commit murder or robbery for conscience' sake be meant those who commit acts, which, under ordinary circumstances, they themselves would consider crimes, but which, in their judgment, cease to be so when performed at the prompting of conscience,—for the repression, for example, of *other people's* consciences, or for the propagation of "the true faith,"—we *might* content ourselves with replying, 1. That we never heard of such cases among those who contend that conscience is the supreme law, and that every one must obey its dictates. All who believe this necessarily learn to respect other people's rights, as well as to assert their own; it is only amongst those who deny this maxim, that we find such instances as the above; and we might safely leave the objectors, therefore, to their own dark books of casuistry, in which the precise modes and degrees in which they may "do evil that good may come," are duly set forth. Assuredly, it is rather hard to adduce, against the operation of any principle, instances which, if that principle were in operation, could not even exist. Nevertheless, we are ready to affirm, 2. That if the said persecutors be truly and conscientiously convinced that it is their duty, as in the sight of God, to persecute, they are justified in so doing *while in that state of mind;* though, in accordance with what has been laid down, they may have contracted a great amount of guilt in the process by which they have arrived at it. 3. That if they have arrived at it after having honestly investigated the subject, and without any voluntary error or self-deception, — though we have our doubts whether there ever was such a case, — they are wholly innocent; but, 4. That, as they are infringing other people's civil rights, though *they* do not think so, it is perfectly competent to those upon whom they are exercising their freaks of eccentric piety, to deal with them as with the aforesaid *conscientious criminals;* and punish them, (if they have the power,) not for tormenting men from the best possible motives, but for *tormenting* them, — those who are *de facto* " tormented " not being capable of understanding such refined distinctions.

Thus the principle advocated is liable to no abuse, nor does society lose any one of its present safeguards by its universal adoption. But even were it otherwise, whether would it be preferable, — that one man in a century should go unpunished, because, under a peculiar species of hallucination, he professed himself conscientiously impelled to perpetrate moral wrong; or that we should recognize a principle which would justify the perpetual and universal oppression of conscience for speculative opinions?

In fact, however, nothing can be more ridiculous than to profess any alarm lest mankind should plead conscience in favor of the violation of any of the laws of practical morals. In these there has ever been, and ever will be, a remarkable unanimity. As Bayle has well said, " We are all agreed about the doctrines which teach men to live soberly and righteously, to love God, to abstain from revenge, to forgive our enemies, to render good for evil, to be charitable. We are divided about points which tend not to make the yoke of Christian morality either heavier or lighter. The Papists believe transubstantiation; the Reformed believe it not. This makes not for vice one way or other." To the same purport, a very different writer, Robert Hall, has observed: " The doctrines of our holy religion may be wofully curtailed and corrupted, and its profession sink into formality; but its moral precepts are so plain and striking, and guarded by such clear and awful sanctions, as to render it impossible it can ever be converted into an active instrument of vice. Let the appeal be made to facts. Look through all the different sects and parties into which professed Christians are unhappily divided. Where is there one to be found who has innovated in the rule of life, by substituting vice in the place of virtue?" We may safely restrict ourselves, therefore, to the case of speculative opinions; and we will take the strongest. It may be said, "Is a man, conscientiously convinced that the Bible is false, no longer bound to believe it?" We answer, he has a *prior duty* to perform. To believe the Bible true, in that very state of mind in which he believes it false, is a simple impossibility, and therefore not directly his duty. But it is his duty to inquire; and we put sufficient faith in the variety and conclusiveness of the evidences of its truth, to believe that, if he inquire honestly, he will believe it true. If there be a case of one who has thus honestly inquired, and still conscientiously believes it false, — if he can truly allege that he has left no means of investigation unemployed, and suffered no prejudice to interfere with his judgment, — we shall rather choose to believe that he labors under some invincible obliquity of intellect, which in the eye of the Omniscient renders his error innocent, than admit the monstrous dogma, that he incurs guilt for error absolutely involuntary. But whether there be such a case is quite another question.

We maintain, then, the principle asserted by the illustrious writers already cited, — and we apply it consistently and universally.

By the assertion of this principle, we are far from justifying separation from any religious communion, merely because there are some things we disapprove, or may wish otherwise. If this were acted upon, there would be as many sects as individuals: we merely contend, that, when such objections have assumed the form of conscientious scruples, so that he who feels them can honestly say, "In my opinion

I cannot profess such a doctrine, or practise such a rite, or appear to sanction either the one or the other, without offending God, or fearing lest I should do so," — his separation is not only justified, but *necessitated*. Be it about the most insignificant matter that ever disturbed a "weak brother," it matters not; for while in that condition it is not insignificant to him. If actually in the wrong, still it appears to him that he is in the right; and while in that state he must act in harmony with his convictions.

People have not been slow to acknowledge this doctrine in words; but they need to be reminded of it, since they will not fairly act upon it. They will still charge the Separatist, even the conscientious Separatist, with "sin," — forgetting that, in doing so, they not only assume that they infallibly know his opinions to be erroneous, which (if their modesty be no obstacle, and it seldom is) they have a perfect right to do; but that, whether right or wrong, there has been negligence, want of candor, or some sinister bias in the process by which he has arrived at them; and this no man has a right to assume unless he has the prerogative "of discerning spirits." We were particularly amused with an example of this sort of inconsistency in one of the "Oxford Tracts,"* in which, while it is admitted that the conscientious Dissenter is not necessarily a "sinner," still it remains true that his dissent is a "sin." We can imagine the perplexity of one who, meditating the crime of nonconformity, comes to a clergyman professing these delightfully puzzling doctrines for solution of his doubts and difficulties. "Can I," he might say, "separate from the Church of England without 'sin'; seeing that I cannot affirm what she affirms, nor practise what she enjoins, without, in my opinion, committing a sin?" "If that be the state of your conscience," would be the reply, "you cannot belong to the Church of England; but remember, that neither can you secede from her without sin." "Why, then, I am in a hopeful case," rejoins the miserable recusant; "I am ruined either way; for whether I remain in the church, or go out of it, — and one of them I must do, — I commit a sin." Then how glad will his spiritual adviser be to administer that consolation, which his revered teachers of Oxford have, for this very case, made and provided! He will say, "You must distinguish here: Though you cannot secede from us without sin, yet it does not hence follow that you are a sinner." On this his countenance brightens up, and he is most eager to learn that auspicious doctrine, by which it appears that a man may commit a sin and yet be no sinner. Whereupon his oracle cites the *ipsissima verba* of the "Tracts," and responds: "To say that a particular thing is a sin, is a very different thing from saying that every one who does it is a sinner. . . . . . To kill a fellow-creature is undoubtedly a crime; but you would not say that the person who killed another by accident, or in defence of his country or of his own life, or by command of lawful authorities, is a criminal?" * No, would be the easy reply; neither should we say, in *that* case, that killing was a crime. By parity of reasoning, if the conscientious Dissenter be no sinner for dissent, it can only be because dissent, in *that* case, is no sin. You ought upon *your* principle to say, that the executioner, in hanging a man, commits a *crime*, though it is true he is no *criminal!* This distinction, therefore, will not much help the recusant; and he is still left to decide the miserable alternative — of sinning by remaining in the church, or sinning by going out of it.

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* No. LI.

But we must conclude; and we shall do so with a few reflections of a general nature on the advantages of the "Right of Private Judgment"; amongst which, with some risk of being charged with paradox, we shall venture to enumerate many of its reputed "evils."

Whatever the evils incidental to the Right, — and we by no means deny that there are evils, — they are trivial compared to the advantages it secures. It frees us at once from every form and degree of persecution; it leaves inviolate the supremacy over conscience to Him who alone is its fitting and rightful Sovereign; it permits the conscience itself to move freely in obedience to its essential laws; it secures for the propagation of truth the only weapons which she can successfully employ, argument and persuasion; and it robs error of the only weapons *she* can successfully employ, penalties and violence: in a word, it prevents truth from resorting to that in which alone she is weak, and error from resorting to that in which alone she is strong. But further, to a philosophic mind, which calmly and soberly considers the subject, there will always be reason to doubt whether even what we call the *evils* incidental to the exercise of "private judgment" are so in reality; and whether they are not connected directly or indirectly with more than a counterbalancing amount of good.

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* Oxford Tracts, No. LI. p. 3.

To confine ourselves to the common argument against the exercise of the "Right" derived from the various interpretations of the Scriptures, — we are by no means convinced that absolute unity of opinion would be a benefit at all. If, as we devoutly believe, an honest investigation of their contents will in general secure even to the humblest a knowledge of all that is essential to salvation, the exercise of the right is vindicated; unless it be pretended that it is a dreadful evil that men should differ on points which are *not* essential to their salvation. Now, that there has ever been a remarkable concurrence of opinion with regard to the most important doctrines, is undeniable. The only question therefore is, whether the remaining differences may not be connected with advantages greater than would accrue from absolute uniformity of opinion. This we do not think it difficult to prove.

That the Scriptures should be attended with difficulties, was fit, probably inevitable, in itself; that those difficulties should lead to varieties of opinion, was an incidental result of the prevailing reasons which induced the Divine Author to leave them on its pages. Such reasons we may readily discover.

With an overbalance of evidence in behalf of the authority of the Bible generally, and of its more important revelations, it was still not desirable that that evidence should be of such a nature as to *necessitate* conviction, and render the exercise of docility, candor, and faith impracticable, — still less to make all diligence in its study unnecessary; it was fit that the Scriptures should contain some obscurities on minor points, to exercise patience, stimulate inquiry, teach humility, rebuke pride, exercise faith. Nor is this all. The differences of opinion thence resulting afford the various communities of Christians, if they would but use it, the most obvious and easy method of testing and exercising the practical power of those principles of charity which they all profess. Charity towards those who think just with ourselves, is but an enlarged selfishness: we are pleased to look at the reflection of our own fair orthodoxy in the mirror of their minds. But to feel that charity, and to manifest it in defiance of the points on which we differ, requires and implies a higher principle. Charity to our own party is often but another name for party spirit: give us the charity which constrains "Judah not to vex Ephraim, and Ephraim not to envy Judah," — the charity which induced the Samaritan to perform offices of kindness to the perishing Jew. Painful as are the disputes and controversies on non-essential points, we believe the time will come when the sublime spectacle of essential unity amidst minor differences will be fully realized; and when it will be seen how superior, after all, is such "unity of the spirit" to any "uniformity of the letter."

We may add, that to demand that there should be perfect uniformity in religious opinions, is to demand a mere impossibility, so long as minds are differently constituted. This is confirmed by the general analogies observable in the constitution and development of human nature. God has so constructed us, that, while there is remarkable uniformity both in the physical and moral peculiarities on which the very existence and social well-being of the race depend, there are endless diversities on all points which do not involve them. It is much the same with Christianity. The learned and the unlearned, if sincere, generally form a very similar notion of its fundamental doctrines. All beyond (and even the *theory* of these) is the source of interminable diversities of sentiment.

Let men say what they will, they will find it hard to discover any volume which, in all its great outlines, is plainer than the "Book of God." It has its obscurities and its mysteries, it is true, — wisely left there, as already attempted to be shown; but they trouble not the humble and docile, — myriads of whom, almost without any teacher but itself, have learned from it enough to teach them how to live well, and how to die happy. Its light has illumined the whole pathway of their present pilgrimage, and penetrated the depths of the sepulchre with the radiance of that "hope which is full of immortality." So far from its being true, that the indiscriminate exercise of the Right of private judgment amongst the humbler classes leads to interminable diversities of interpretation and of doctrine, it is notorious that most of the profitless controversies which have obscured the Bible and cursed the world have originated with those who have assumed to be the religious instructors of mankind. They have not sprung up amongst the poor, nor by the poor have they been cherished. It is, therefore, with a feeling of just indignation, that we hear professed Christians and professed Protestants — at all events those who are *not* professed Romanists — giving utterance to the sentiment, "that the private student of Scripture would not ordinarily gain a knowledge of the Gospel from it." Such a doctrine is not merely an insult to common sense, — it is a libel on the Divine Author of the Bible. Are we to believe that, "knowing perfectly what was in man," he has yet so constructed the volume of revelation, that even its fundamental doctrines remain an inscrutable mystery? Or did the great Teacher he sent, teach in so peculiar a manner, that even the more important truths he taught remained unintelligible? If so, we must receive in a new and monstrous sense the assurance, that "he spake as never man spake"; that he spake, not so much to reveal, as to disguise! But this record remains, that, while learned ignorance cavilled and derided, "THE COMMON PEOPLE HEARD HIM GLADLY."

Far different from the judgment of these spurious Protestants was that of Bishop Horsley, with whose weighty words we shall now conclude. "I will not scruple to assert, that the most illiterate Christian, if he can but read his English Bible, and will take the pains to read it in this manner (comparing parallel passages), will not only attain all that practical knowledge which is necessary to his salvation; but, by God's blessing, he will become learned in every thing relating to his religion in such a degree that he will not be liable to be misled, either by the refined arguments, or by the false assertions, of those who endeavor to ingraft their own opinion upon the oracles of God. He may safely be ignorant of all philosophy except what is to be learned from the sacred books; which, indeed, contain the highest philosophy adapted to the lowest apprehensions. He may safely remain ignorant of all history, except so much of the history of the first ages of the Jewish and of the Christian Church, as is to be gathered from the canonical books of the Old and New Testament. Let him study these in the manner I recommend, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated; and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy and recondite history shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith. The Bible, thus studied, will indeed prove to be what we Protestants esteem it, — a certain and sufficient rule of faith and practice."

REASON AND FAITH: THEIR CLAIMS AND CONFLICTS.*

"REASON and Faith," says one of our old divines, with the quaintness characteristic of his day, "resemble the two sons of the patriarch; Reason is the first-born, but Faith inherits the blessing." The image is ingenious, and the antithesis striking; but nevertheless the sentiment is far from just. It is hardly right to represent Faith as *younger* than Reason: the fact undoubtedly being, that human creatures trust and believe long before they reason or know. The truth is, that both Reason and Faith are coeval with the nature of man, and were designed to dwell in his heart together. They are, and ever were, and, in such creatures as ourselves, must be, reciprocally complementary; — neither can exclude the other. It is as impossible to exercise an acceptable faith without reason for so exercising it, — that is, without exercising reason while we exercise faith,* — as it is to apprehend by our reason, exclusive of faith, all the truths on which we are daily compelled to *act*, whether in relation to this world or the next. Neither is it right to represent either of them as failing of the promised heritage, except as both may fail alike, by perversion from their true end, and depravation of their genuine nature; for if to the faith of which the New Testament speaks so much, a peculiar blessing is promised, it is evident from that same volume that it is not a "faith without reason" any more than a "faith without works," which is commended by the Author of Christianity. And this is sufficiently proved by the injunction "to be ready to give a reason for the hope" — and therefore for the faith — "which is in us."

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* "Edinburgh Review," October, 1849; with an Appendix.

1. *Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte.* Eighth edition, pp. 60. 8vo. London.

2. *The Nemesis of Faith.* By J. A. FROUDE, M. A., Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. 12mo. London. pp. 227.

3. *Popular Christianity, its Transition State and Probable Development.* By F. J. FOXTON, B. A.; formerly of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Perpetual Curate of Stoke Prior and Docklow, Herefordshire. 12mo. London. pp. 226.

If, therefore, we were to imitate the quaintness of the old divine, on whose *dictum* we have been commenting, we should rather compare Reason and Faith to the two trusty spies, "faithful amongst the faithless," who confirmed each other's report of "that good land which flowed with milk and honey," and to *both* of whom the promise of a rich inheritance there was given, — and in due time amply redeemed. Or, rather, if we might be permitted to pursue the same vein a little further, and throw over our shoulders for a moment that mantle of allegory which none but Bunyan could wear long and wear gracefully, we should represent Reason and Faith as twin-born; — the one, in form and features the image of manly beauty, — the other, of feminine grace and gentleness; but to each of whom, alas! is allotted a sad privation. While the bright eyes of Reason are full of piercing and restless intelligence, his ear is closed to sound; and while Faith has an ear of exquisite delicacy, on her sightless orbs, as she lifts them towards heaven, the sunbeam plays in vain. Hand in hand the brother and sister, in all mutual love, pursue their way, through a world on which, like ours, day breaks and night falls alternate; by day the eyes of Reason are the guide of Faith, and by night the ear of Faith is the guide of Reason. As is wont with those who labor under these privations respectively, Reason is apt to be eager, impetuous, impatient of that instruction which his infirmity will not permit him readily to apprehend; while Faith, gentle and docile, is ever willing to listen to the voice by which alone truth and wisdom can effectually reach her.

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* Let it not be said that this is playing upon an ambiguity in the word Reason; considered in the first clause as an *argument;* and, in the second, as the characteristic endowment of our species. The distinction between Reason and *Reasoning* (though most important) does not affect the above statement; for though Reason may be exercised where there is no giving of *reasons*, there can be no giving of reasons without the exercise of Reason.

It has been shown by Butler in the fourth and fifth chapters (Part I.) of his great work, that the entire constitution and condition of man, viewed in relation to the present world alone, and, consequently, all the analogies derived from that fact in relation to a future world, suggest the conclusion, that we are here the subjects of a probationary discipline, or in a course of education for another state of existence. But it has not, perhaps, been sufficiently insisted on, that if in the actual course of that education, (of which *enlightened obedience* to the "law of virtue," as Butler expresses it, or, which is the same thing, to the dictates of supreme wisdom and goodness, is the great end,) we give an unchecked ascendency to either Reason or Faith, we vitiate the whole process. The chief instrument by which that process is carried on is not Reason alone, or Faith alone, but their well-balanced and reciprocal interaction. It is a system of alternate checks and limitations, in which Reason does not supersede Faith, nor Faith encroach on Reason. But our meaning will be more evident when we have made one or two remarks on what are conceived to be their respective provinces.

In the domain of Reason men generally include, 1st, what are called "intuitions"; 2d, "necessary deductions" from these; and, 3d, deductions from their own direct "experience"; while in the domain of Faith are ranked all truths and propositions which are received, not *without* reasons indeed, but for reasons underived from the *intrinsic* evidence (whether intuitive or deductive, or directly experimental) of the propositions themselves; — for reasons (such as credible testimony, for example) *extrinsic* to the proper meaning and significance of such propositions. Yet such reasons, by accumulations and convergency, may be capable of subduing the force of any difficulties, or improbabilities, which cannot be *demonstrated* to involve absolute contradictions.*

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* Of the first kind of truths, or those perceived by intuition, we have examples in what are called "self-evident axioms," and "fundamental laws" or "conditions of thought," which no wise man has ever attempted to *prove*. Of the second, we have examples in the entire fabric of mathematical science, reared from its basis of axioms and definitions, as well as in every other *necessary* deduction from *admitted* premises. The third virtually includes any conclusion in science based on direct experiment, or observation; though the belief of the truth even of Newton's system of the world, when received as Locke says he received, and as the generality of men receive it, — without being able to follow the steps by which the great geometer proves his conclusions, — may be represented rather as an act of Faith than an act of Reason; as much so as a belief in the truth of Christianity, founded on its historic and other evidences The greater part of a man's knowledge, indeed, even of science, — even the greater part of a scientific man's knowledge of science, based as it is on testimony alone (and which so often compels him to renounce to-day what he thought certain yesterday), — may be not unjustly considered as more allied to Faith than Reason. It may be said, perhaps, that the above classification of the truths received by Reason and Faith respectively is arbitrary; that even some of their alleged sources are not always clearly distinguishable; that the evidence of experience may in some sort be reduced to testimony, — that of sense; and testimony reduced to experience, — that of human veracity under given circumstances; both being founded on the observed uniformity of certain phenomena under similar conditions. We admit the truth of this; and we admit it the more willingly, as it shows that so inextricably intertwined in our nature are the roots both of Reason and Faith, that no definitions that can be framed will completely separate them; none that will not involve many phenomena which may be said to fall under the dominion of one as much as of the other. It is sufficient for

In receiving important doctrines on the strength of such evidence, and in holding to them against the perplexities they involve, or, what is harder still, against the prejudices they oppose, every exercise of an intelligent faith will, on analysis, be found to consist; its only necessary limit will be *proven contradictions* in the propositions submitted to it; for then no evidence can justify belief, or even render it possible. But no *other* difficulties, however great, will justify unbelief, where man has all that he can justly demand,—evidence such in its nature as he can deal with, and on which he is accustomed to *act* in his most important affairs in this world (thus admitting its validity), and such in amount as to render it more likely that the doctrines it substantiates are true, than, from mere *ignorance* of the mode in which these difficulties can be solved, he can infer them to be false. "Probabilities," says Bishop Butler, "are to us the very guide of life"; and when the probabilities arise out of evidence on which we are competent to pronounce, and the improbabilities merely from our surmises, where we have no evidence to deal with, and perhaps, from the limitation of our capacities, could not deal with it if we had it, it is not difficult to see what course practical wisdom tells man he *ought* to pursue; and which he invariably *does* pursue, whatever difficulties beset him,—in all cases except one!

The more we reflect, the more we shall see that an inviolable union—a mutual dependence of Reason and Faith—is the great law of the moral school in which we are being

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our practical purpose, to take, without any too subtle refinement, the line of demarcation which is, perhaps, as obvious as any, and as generally recognized. Few would say that a *generalized* inference from direct experiment was not matter of reason rather than of faith; though an act of faith *is* involved in the process; and few would not call confidence in testimony, where probabilities were nearly balanced, by the name of faith rather than reason, though an act of reason is involved in *that* process. We are much more anxious to show their general involution with one another than the points of discrimination between them.

educated. This law is equally, or almost equally, its characteristic, whether we regard man simply in his present condition, or in his present *in relation* to his future condition, — as an inhabitant only of this world, or a candidate for another; and to this law, by a series of analogies as striking as any of those which Butler has pointed out (and on which we heartily wish his comprehensive genius had expended a chapter or two), Christianity, in the demands it makes on *both* principles conjointly, is evidently adapted.

Men often speak, indeed, as if the exercise of Faith was excluded from their condition as inhabitants of the present world. But it requires but a very slight consideration to show, that the boasted prerogative of Reason is here also that of a limited monarch; and that its attempts to make itself absolute can only end in its own dethronement, and, after successive revolutions, in all the anarchy of absolute pyrrhonism.

For in the intellectual and moral education of man, considered merely as a citizen of the present world, we see the constant and inseparable union of the two principles, and provision made for their perpetual exercise. He cannot advance a step, indeed, without both. We see faith demanded not only amidst the dependence and ignorance in which childhood and youth are passed; not only in the whole process by which we acquire the imperfect knowledge which is to fit us for being men; but to the very last we may be truly said to *believe* far more than we *know*. "Indeed," says Butler, "the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence with which we are obliged to take up in the daily course of life, is scarce to be expressed." Nay, in an intelligible sense, even the "primary truths," or "first principles," or "fundamental laws of thought," or "self-evident maxims," or "intuitions," or by whatever other names philosophers have been pleased to designate them, which, in a special sense, are the very province of *reason*, as contradistinguished from "reasoning," or logical deduction, may be said almost as truly to depend on faith as on reason for their reception.* For the only ground for *believing* them true is that man cannot help so believing them! The same may be said of that great fact, without which the whole world would be at a stand-still, — a belief in the uniformity of the phenomena of external nature; that the same sun, for example, which rose yesterday and to-day, will rise again to-morrow. That this cannot be *demonstrated*, is admitted on all hands; and that it is not absolutely proved from *experience* is evident, both from the fact that experience cannot prove any thing future, and from the fact that the uniformity supposed is only accepted as partially and transiently true; the great bulk of mankind, even while they so confidently act upon that uniformity, rejecting the idea of its being an *eternal* uniformity. Every theist believes that the present order of the universe once *began* to be; and every Christian, and most other men, believe that it will also one day cease to be.

But perhaps the most striking example of the helplessness to which man is soon reduced if he relies upon his reason alone, is the spectacle of the issue of his investigations into that which one would imagine he must know most intimately, if he knows any thing; and that is, his own nature, — his own mind. There is something, to one who reflects long enough upon it, inexpressibly whimsical in the questions which the mind is for ever putting to itself respecting itself; and to which the said mind returns from its dark caverns only an echo. We are apt, when we speculate about the mind, to forget for the moment, that it is at once the querist and the oracle; and to regard it as something *out* of itself, like a mineral in the hands of the analytic chemist. We cannot fully enter into the absurdities of its condition, except by remembering that it is our own wise selves who so grotesquely bewilder us. The mind, on such occasions, takes itself (if we may so speak) into its own hands, turns itself about as a savage would a watch, or a monkey a letter; interrogates itself, listens to the echo of its own voice, and is obliged, after all, to lay itself down again with a puzzled expression, and acknowledge that of its very self, itself knows little or nothing! "I am material," exclaims one of these whimsical beings, to whom the heaven-descended "Know thyself" would seem to have been ironically addressed. "No! immaterial," says another. "I am both material and immaterial," exclaims, perhaps, the very same mind at different times. "Thought itself may be matter modified," says one. "Rather," says another of the same perplexed species, "matter is thought modified; for what you call matter is but a phenomenon." "Both are independent and totally distinct substances, mysteriously, inexplicably conjoined," says a third. "*How* they are conjoined we know no more than the dead. Not so much, perhaps." "Do I ever *cease* to think," says the mind to itself, "even in sleep? Is not my *essence* thought?" "You ought to know your own essence best," all creation will reply. "I am confident," says one, "that I never do cease to think, — not even in the soundest sleep." "You do, for a long time, every night of your life," exclaims another, equally confident and equally ignorant. "*Where* do I exist?" it goes on. "Am I in the brain? Am I in the whole body? Am I anywhere? Am I nowhere?" "I cannot have any local existence, for I know I am immaterial," says one. "I have a local existence, because I *am* material," says another. "I have a local existence, *though* I am *not* material," says a third. "Are my habitual actions voluntary," it exclaims, "however rapid they become; though I am unconscious of these volitions when they have attained a certain rapidity; or do I become a mere automaton as respects such actions? and therefore an automaton nine times out of ten, when I act at all?" To this query two opposite answers are given by different minds; and by others, perhaps wiser, none at all; while, often, opposite answers are given by the same mind at different times. In like manner has every action, every operation, every emotion of the mind, been made the subject of endless doubt and disputation. Surely if, as Soame Jenyns imagined, the infirmities of man, and even graver evils, are permitted in order to afford amusement to superior intelligences, and make the angels laugh, few things could afford them better sport than the perplexities of the child of clay engaged in the study of himself. "Alas!" exclaims at last the baffled spirit of this babe in intellect, as he surveys his shattered toys, his broken theories of metaphysics, "I know that I *am;* but *what* I am, — *where* I am, — even *how* I act; not only what is my essence, but what even my mode of operation, — of all this I *know* nothing; and, boast of reason as I may, all that I think on these points is matter of opinion, — or is matter of faith!" He resembles, in fact, nothing so much as a kitten first introduced to its own image in a mirror; she runs to the back of it, she leaps over it, she turns and twists, and jumps and frisks, in all directions, in the vain attempt to reach the fair illusion; and, at length, turns away in weariness from that incomprehensible enigma, — the image of herself!

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* Common language seems to indicate this: since we call that disposition of mind which leads some men to deny the above fundamental truths (or *affect* to deny them), not by a word which indicates the opposite of reason, but the opposite of faith, — Scepticism, Unbelief, Incredulity.

One would imagine — perhaps not untruly — that the Divine Creator had subjected us to these difficulties, and especially that incomprehensible *tri*lemma, — that there is an union and interaction of two totally distinct substances, or that matter is but thought, or that thought is but matter, — one of which must be true, and all of which approach as near to mutual contradictions as can well be conceived, — for the very purpose of rebuking our presumption, and of teaching us humility; that He had left these obscurities at the very threshold, — nay, within the very mansion of the mind itself, — for the express purpose of deterring man from playing the dogmatizing fool when he looked abroad. Yet, in spite of his raggedness and poverty at home, no sooner does man look out of his dusky dwelling, than, like Goldsmith's little Beau, who, in his garret up five pair of stairs, boasts of his friendship with lords, he is apt to assume airs of magnificence, and, glancing at the Infinite through his little eye-glass, to affect an intimate acquaintance with the most respectable secrets of the universe!

It is undeniable, then, that the perplexities which uniformly puzzle man in the physical world, and even in the little world of his own mind, when he passes a certain limit, are just as unmanageable as those found in the moral constitution and government of the universe, or in the disclosures of the volume of Revelation. In both we find abundance of inexplicable difficulties; sometimes arising from our absolute ignorance, and perhaps quite as often from our partial knowledge. These difficulties are probably left on the pages of both volumes for some of the same reasons; many of them, it may be, because even the commentary of the Creator himself could not render them plain to a finite understanding, though a necessary and salutary exercise of our humility may be involved in their reception; others, if not purely (which seems not probable) yet partly for the sake of exercising and training that humility, as an essential part of the education of a *child;* others, surmountable, indeed, in the progress of knowledge and by prolonged effort of the human intellect, may be designed to stimulate that intellect to strenuous action and healthy effort,—as well as to supply, in their solution, as time rolls on, an ever-accumulating mass of proofs of the profundity of the wisdom which has so far anticipated all the wisdom of man; and of the divine origin of both the great books which he is privileged to study as a pupil, and even to illustrate as a commentator,—but the text of which he cannot alter.

But, for submitting to us many profound and insoluble problems, the second of the above reasons—the training of the intellect and heart of man to submission to the Supreme Intelligence—would alone be sufficient. For if, as is indicated by every thing in human nature, by the constitution of the world as adapted to that nature, and by the representations of Scripture, which are in analogy with both, the present world is but the school of man in this the childhood of his being, to prepare him for the enjoyment of an immortal manhood in another, every thing might be expected to be subordinated to this great object; and as the *end* of that education can be no other than an *enlightened obedience* to God, the harmonious and concurrent exercise of reason and faith becomes absolutely necessary: not of reason to the exclusion of faith, for otherwise there would be no adequate test of man's docility and submission; nor of a faith that would assert itself, not only independent of reason, but in contradiction to it, — for this would not be what God requires, and what alone can quadrate with that intelligent nature he has impressed on his offspring, — a *reasonable* obedience. Implicit obedience, then, to the dictates of an all-perfect wisdom, exercised amidst many difficulties and perplexities, as so many tests of sincerity, and yet sustained by evidences which justify the conclusions which involve them, would seem to be the great object of man's moral education here; and to vindicate both the partial evidence addressed to his reason, and the abundant difficulties which it leaves to his faith. "The evidence of religion," says Butler, "is fully sufficient for all the purposes of probation, how far soever it is from being satisfactory as to the purposes of curiosity, or any other: and, indeed, it answers the purposes of the former in several respects, which it would not do if it were as overbearing as is required." * Or as Pascal beautifully puts it: "There is light enough for those whose sincere wish is to see, — and darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition." †

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* Analogy, Part II. Chap. VIII.

† Pensées. Faugère's edition, Tom. II. p. 151. The views here dedeloped will be found an expansion of some brief hints at the close of the article on Pascal's "Life and Genius" (Ed. Review, Jan., 1847), to which the want of space then rendered it impossible to do justice. The pres-

As He "who spake as never man spake" is pleased often to illustrate the conduct of the Father of Spirits to his intelligent offspring by a reference to the conduct which flows from the relations of the human parent to *his* children, so the present subject admits of similar illustration. What God does with us in that process of moral education to which we have just adverted, is exactly what every wise parent endeavors to do with his children, — though by methods, as we may well judge, proportionably less perfect. Man, instinctively, or by reflection, adapts himself to the nature of his children; and, seeing that only so far as it is justly trained can they be happy, makes the harmonious and concurrent development of their reason and their faith his object; he endeavors to teach

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ent opportunity is gladly seized of pointing the attention of the reader to a tract of Archbishop Whately's, entitled "The Example of Children as proposed to Christians," which his Grace, having been struck with a coincidence between some of the thoughts in the tract and those expressed in the "Review," was so kind as to transmit to the present writer. Had he seen the tract before, he would have been glad to illustrate and confirm his own views by those of this highly gifted prelate. He earnestly recommends the tract in question (as well as the whole of the remarkable volume in which it is now incorporated, "Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion") to the perusal of the reader, and at the same time ventures to express a conviction (having been led by the circumstances above mentioned to a fuller acquaintance with his Grace's theological writings than he had previously possessed), that though this lucid and eloquent writer may, for obvious reasons, be most widely known by his "Logic" and "Rhetoric," the time will come when his theological works will be, if not more widely read, still more highly prized. To great powers of argument and illustration, and delightful transparency of diction and style, he adds a higher quality still, — and a very rare quality it is, — an evident and intense honesty of purpose, an absorbing desire to arrive at the *exact truth*, and to state it with perfect fairness and with the just limitations. Without pretending to agree with all that Archbishop Whately has written on the subject of theology (though he carries his readers with him as frequently as any writer), it may be remarked that, in relation to that whole class of subjects to which the present essay has reference, there is no author of the present day whose contributions are more numerous or more valuable.

them that without which they cannot be happy, — obedience, but a *reasonable* obedience. He gives them, in his general procedure and conduct, sufficient proofs of his superior knowledge, superior wisdom, and unchanging love; and secure in the general effect of this, he leaves them to receive by *faith* many things which he cannot explain to them if he would, till they get older; many things which he *can* only partially explain; and many others which he might more perfectly explain, but *will* not, partly as a test of their docility, and partly to invite and necessitate the healthy and energetic exercise of their reason in finding out the explanation for themselves. Confiding in the same general effect of his procedure and conduct, he does not hesitate, when the foresight

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The highly ingenious ironical *brochure*, entitled "Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte"; the essays above mentioned, "On some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion"; those "On some of the Dangers to Christian Faith," and on the "Errors of Romanism"; the work on the "Kingdom of Christ," not to mention others, are well worthy of universal perusal. They abound in views both original and just, stated with all the author's aptness of illustration and transparency of language. It may be added, that in many of his *occasional* sermons he has incidentally contributed many most beautiful fragments to that ever-accumulating mass of internal evidence which the Scriptures themselves supply in their very structure, and which is evolved by diligent investigation of the relation and coherence of one part of them with another. It is also matter of congratulation, that a small and unpretending, but very powerful, little tract, by the same writer, entitled "Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidences," has passed through many editions, has been translated into most of the European languages, and, amongst the rest, very recently into German, with an appropriate preface, by Professor Abeltzhauser, of the University of Dublin. That tract shows to demonstration, that as much of the evidence of Christianity as is necessary for conviction may be made perfectly clear to the meanest capacity; and that, in spite of the assertions of Rome and of Oxford to the contrary, the Apostolic injunction to *every* Christian to be ready to render a *reason* "for the hope that is in him," — somewhat better than that *no* reason of the Hindoo or the Hottentot, that he believes what he is told, *without* any reason except that he is told it, — is an injunction possible to be obeyed.

of their ultimate welfare justifies it, to draw still more largely on their faith, in acts of apparent harshness and severity. Time, he knows, will show, though perhaps not till his yearning heart has ceased to beat for their welfare, that all that he did, he did in love. He knows, too, that if his lessons are taken aright, and his children become the good and happy men he wishes them to be, they will say, as they visit his sepulchre, and recall with sorrow the once unappreciated love which animated him, — and perhaps remember with a sorrow deeper still, the transient resentments caused by a salutary severity: " He was indeed a friend ; he corrected us not for his pleasure, but for our profit ; and what we once thought was caprice or passion, we now *know* was love."

These analogies afford a true, though most imperfect, representation of the moral discipline to which Supreme Wisdom is subjecting us ; and as men are accustomed to despair of any child with whom paternal experience and authority go for nothing, unless he can fully understand the intrinsic *reasons* for every *special* act of duty which that experience and authority dictate ; as they are sure that he who has not learned to obey when young will never, when of age, know how to govern either himself or others ; so a similar conduct in all the children of dust towards the Father of Spirits justifies a still more gloomy augury ; inasmuch as the difference between the knowledge of man and the ignorance of a child absolutely vanishes, in comparison with that interval which must ever subsist between the knowledge of the Eternal and the ignorance of man.

The remarks that have been made are not uncalled for in the present day. For, unfortunately, it is easy just now to detect in many classes of minds a tendency to divorce Reason from Faith, or Faith from Reason ; and to proclaim that " what God hath joined together " shall henceforth exist in alienation. The old conflict between the claims of these two guiding principles of man (in no age wholly suppressed) is visibly renewed in our day ; and the tendency in question is manifested in relation both to Natural Theology and to Revealed Religion. In relation to the latter especially, there are large classes amongst us who press the claims of faith so far, that it would become, if they had their will, an utterly unreasonable faith; some of whom do not scruple to speak slightingly of the evidences which substantiate Christianity; to decry and depreciate the study of them; to pronounce that study unnecessary; and in many cases even to insinuate their insufficiency. They are loud in the mean time in extolling a faith which, as Whately truly observes, is no whit better than the faith of a heathen; who has no other or better reason to offer for his religion than that his father told him it was true! But this plainly is not the intelligent faith, which, as we have seen, is everywhere inculcated and applauded in the Scriptures; it is not that faith by which Christianity, appealing in the midst of a multitude of such traditional religions to palpable evidence addressed to men's senses and understandings (in a way no other religion ever did), everywhere destroyed the systems for which their votaries could only say that their fathers told them they were true. And yet this blind belief in such tradition, many advocates of Christianity would now enjoin us to imitate! It might have occurred to them, one would think, that, on their principles, Christianity never could have succeeded; for every mind must have been hopelessly preoccupied against all examination of its claims. It is, indeed, incomparably better that a man should be a sincere Christian even by an utterly unreasoning and passive faith (if that be possible), than no Christian at all; yet at the best, such a man is a possessor of the truth only by accident. He ought to have, and, if he be a sincere disciple of truth, will seek, some more solid grounds for holding it. It is but too obvious, however, that the disposition in many to enjoin this obsequious mood of mind is prompted by a strong desire to revive the ancient empire of priestcraft and the pretensions of ecclesiastical despotism; to secure readmission amongst mankind of extravagant and preposterous claims, which their advocates are sadly conscious rest on no solid foundation. They feel that, as reason is not *with* them, it must be *against* them; and reason therefore they are determined to exclude.

But the experience of the present "developments" of Oxford teaching may serve to show us how infinitely perilous is this course; and how fearfully both outraged reason and outraged faith will avenge the wrongs done them by their alienation and disjunction. Those results, indeed, we predicted in 1843; before a single leader of the Oxford School had gone over to Rome, and before any tendencies to the opposite extreme of Scepticism had manifested themselves. We then affirmed, that, on the one hand, those who were contending for the corruptions of the fourth century could not possibly find footing there, but must inevitably seek their ultimate resting-place in Rome, — a prediction which has been too amply fulfilled; and that, on the other, the extravagant pretensions put forth on behalf of an uninquiring faith, and the desperate assertion that the "evidence for Christianity" was no stronger than that for "Church principles," must, by reaction, lead on to an outbreak of infidelity. That prophecy, too, has been to the letter accomplished. Our words were: "We have seen it recently asserted by some of the Oxford School, that there is as much reason for rejecting the most essential doctrines of Christianity, — nay, Christianity itself, — as for rejecting their 'Church principles.' That, in short, we have as much reason for being infidels, as for rejecting the doctrine of Apostolical Succession! What other effect such reasoning can have than that of compelling men to believe that there is nothing between infidelity and popery, and of urging them to make a selection between the two, we know not. . . . . . Indeed, we fully expect that, as a reaction of the present extravagances, of the revival of obsolete superstition, we shall have ere long to fight over again the battle with a modified form of infidelity, as now with a modified form of popery. Thus, probably, for some time to come, will the human mind continue to oscillate between the extremes of error; but with a diminished arc at each vibration; until truth shall at last prevail, and compel it to repose in the centre."*

The offensive displays of self-sufficiency and flippancy, of ignorance and presumption, found in the productions of the apostles of the new infidelity of Oxford (of which we shall have a few words to say by and by), are the natural and instructive, though most painful, result of attempting to give predominance to one principle of our nature, where two or more are designed reciprocally to guard and check each other; and such results must ever follow such attempts. The excellence of man — so complexly constituted is his nature — must consist in the harmonious action and proper balance of all the constituents of that nature; the equilibrium he sighs for must be the result of the combined action of forces operating in different directions; of his reason, his faith, his appetites, his affections, his emotions; when these operate each in due proportion, then, and then only, can he be at rest. It may, indeed, transcend any calculus of man to estimate exactly the several elements in this complicated polygon of forces; but we are at least sure that, if any one principle be so developed as to supersede another, no safe equipoise will be attained. We all know familiarly enough that this is the case when the affections or the appetites are more powerful than the reason and the conscience, instead of being in subjection to them: but it is not less the case, though the result is not so palpable, when reason and faith either exclude one another, or trench on each other's domain; when one is pampered and the other starved.† Hence the perils attendant upon their attempted separation, and the ruin which results from their actual alienation and hostility. There is no depth of dreary superstition into which men may not sink in the one case, and no extravagance of ignorant presumption to which they may not soar in the other. It is only by the mutual and alternate action of these different forces, that man can safely navigate his little bark through the narrow straits and by the dangerous rocks which impede his course; and if Faith spread not the sail to the breeze, or if Reason desert the helm, we are in equal peril.

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* Oxford Tract School, Ed. Rev., April, 1843.

† It has been our lot to meet with disciples of the Oxford Tract School who have, by a fatal indulgence of an appetite of belief, brought themselves to believe any mediæval miracle, nay, any ghost story, without examination; saying, with a solemn face, "It is better to believe than to reason." They at last believe as they *will* to believe; and thus is reason avenged. Reason, similarly indulged, believes, with Mr. Foxton and Mr. Froude, that a miracle is even an *impossibility;* and this is the "Nemesis" of faith.

If it be said that this is a disconsolate and dreary doctrine; that man seeks and needs a simpler navigation than this troublesome and intricate course, by star and chart, compass and lead-line; and that this responsibility, of ever

> "Sounding on his dim and perilous way,"

is too grave for so feeble a nature; we answer that such *is* his actual condition. This is a plain matter of fact which cannot be denied. The various principles of his constitution, and his position in relation to the external world, obviously and absolutely subject him to this very responsibility throughout his whole course in this life. It is never remitted or abated; resolves are necessitated upon imperfect evidence, and action imperatively demanded amidst doubts and difficulties in which reason is not satisfied, and faith is required. To argue, therefore, that God cannot have left man to such uncertainty, is to argue as the pertinacious lawyer did, who, on seeing a man in the stocks, asked him what he was placed there for; and on being told, said, "They cannot put you there for *that*." "But I *am* here," was the laconic answer.

The analogy, then, of man's whole condition in this life, might lead us to expect the same system of procedure throughout; that the evidence which substantiates *religious* truth, and claims *religious* action, would involve this responsibility as well as that which substantiates *other* kinds of truth, and demands *other* kinds of action. And after all, what else, in either case, could answer the purpose, *if* (as already said) this world be the school of training of man's moral nature? How else could the discipline of his faculties, the exercise of patience, humility, and fortitude, be secured? How, except amidst a state of things less than certainty, — whether under the form of that passive faith which *mimics* the possession of absolute certainty, or absolute certainty itself, — could man's nature be trained to combined self-reliance and self-distrust, circumspection and resolution, and, above all, to confidence in God? Man cannot be nursed and dandled into the manhood of his nature, by that unthinking faith which leaves no doubts to be felt, and no objections to be weighed; nor can his docility ever be tested, if he is never called upon to believe any thing which it would not be an absurdity and contradiction to deny. This species of responsibility, then, not only cannot be dispensed with, but is absolutely necessary; and consequently, however desirable may appear that short path to certainty which a pretended infallibility* promises to man, or that equally short path which leads to the same termination, by telling us that we are to believe nothing which we cannot *demonstrate* to be true, or which, *à priori*, we may presume to be false, — both the one path and the other must lead astray. In the one case, how can the "*reasonable* service" which Scripture demands, — the enlightened love and conscientious investigation of *truth*, — its reception, not without doubts, but against doubts, — how could all this coexist with a faith which presents the whole sum of religion in the formulary, "I am to believe without a doubt, and perform without hesitation, whatever my guide, Parson A., tells me"? Not that, even in that case (as has often been shown), the man would be relieved from the necessity of absolutely depending on the dreaded exercise of his private judgment: for (unless each man is to remit his religion wholly to the accident of his birth) he must at least have exercised it once for all, and that on two of the most arduous of all questions: first, *which* of several churches, pretending to infallibility, is truly infallible? and next, whether the man may infallibly regard his worthy Parson A. as an infallible expounder of that infallibility? But supposing this stupendous difficulty surmounted, though *then*, it is true, all may seem genuine faith, in reality there is none. Where absolute infallibility is *supposed* to have been attained (even though erroneously), faith, in strict propriety, — certainly *that* faith which is alone of any value as an instrument of men's moral training, which recognizes and intelligently struggles with objections and difficulties, — is impossible. Men may be said, in such case, to *know*, but can hardly be said to believe. Before Columbus had seen America, he *believed* in its existence; but when he *had* seen it, his faith became knowledge. Equally impossible, and for the same reason, is any place for faith on the opposite hypothesis; for if man is to believe nothing but what his reason can comprehend, and to act only upon evidence which amounts to certainty, the same paradox is true; for when there is no reason to doubt, there can be none to believe. Faith ever stands between conflicting probabilities; but her position is (if we may use the metaphor) the centre of gravity between them, and will be proportionally nearer the greater mass.

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* See Archbishop Whately's admirable discourse, entitled, "The Search after Infallibility, considered in reference to the Danger of Religious Errors arising within the Church, in the Primitive as well as in Later Ages." He here makes excellent use of the fruitful principle of Butler's great work, by showing that, however *desirable*, *à priori*, an infallible guide would seem to fallible man, God *in fact* has everywhere denied it; and that in denying it in relation to religion, he has acted only as he always acts.

In the mean time, that arduous responsibility which attaches to man, and which is obviated neither by an implicit faith in a human infallibility, nor an exclusive reference of that faith to cases in which reason is synonymous with demonstration, that is, to cases which leave no room for faith, is at once relieved, and effectually relieved, by the maxim, —

the key-stone of ethical truth, — that only voluntary error condemns us, — that all we are really responsible for, is a faithful, honest, patient investigation and weighing of evidence, as far as our abilities and opportunities admit, and a conscientious pursuit of what we honestly deem truth, wherever it may lead us. We concede that a really dispassionate and patient conduct in this respect is what man is too ready to assume he has practised, — and this fallacy cannot be too sedulously guarded against. But that guilty liability to self-deception does not militate against the truth of the representation now made. It is his *duty* to see that he does not abuse the maxim, — that he does not rashly acquiesce in any conclusion that he *wishes* to be true, or which he is too lazy to examine. If all *possible* diligence and honesty have been exerted in the search, the statement of Chillingworth, bold as it is, we should not hesitate to adopt, in all the vigor of his own language. It is to the effect, that, if "in him alone there were a confluence of all the errors which have befallen the sincere professors of Christianity, he should not be so much afraid of them, as to ask God's pardon for them"; absolutely involuntary error being justly regarded by him as blameless.

On the other hand, from the natural relations of truth with the constitution of the mind of man, it may well be affirmed, that, with the exception of a very few cases of obliquity of intellect, which may safely be left to the merciful interpretations and apologies of Him who created such intellects, those who thus honestly and industriously "seek" shall "find," — not all truth, indeed, but enough to secure their safety; and that whatever remaining errors may infest and disfigure the truth they have attained, these shall not be imputed to them for sin. According to the image which apostolic eloquence has employed, the baser materials which unavoidable haste, prejudice, and ignorance may have incorporated with the gold of the edifice, will be consumed by that fire which "will try every man's work of what sort it is," but he himself will be saved amidst those purifying flames. Like the bark which contained the Apostle and the fortunes of the Gospel, the frail vessel may go to pieces on the rocks, but " by boat or plank " the voyager himself shall " get safe to shore."

It is amply sufficient, then, to lighten our responsibility, that we are answerable only for our honest endeavors to discover and to practise the truth; and, in fact, the responsibility is principally felt to be irksome, and man is so prompt by devices of his own to escape from it, not on account of any intrinsic difficulty which remains after the above limitations are admitted, but because he wishes to be exempted from the very necessity of patient and honest investigation. It is not so much the difficulty of *finding*, as the trouble of *seeking*, the truth; from which he shrinks; a necessity, however, from which, as it is an essential instrument of his moral education and discipline, he can never be released.

If the previous representations be true, the conditions of that intelligent faith which God requires from his intelligent offspring may be fairly inferred to be such as we have already stated; — that the evidence for the truths we are to believe shall be, first, such as our faculties are competent to appreciate, and against which, therefore, the mere negative argument arising from our ignorance of the true solution of such difficulties as are perhaps insoluble because we are finite, can be no reply; and secondly, such an amount of this evidence as shall fairly overbalance all the objections which we *can* appreciate. This is the condition to which God has obviously subjected us as inhabitants of this world; and it is on such evidence we are here perpetually acting. We now believe a thousand things we cannot fully comprehend. We may not see the *intrinsic* evidence of their truth; but their *extrinsic* evidence is sufficient to induce us unhesitatingly to believe and to act upon them. When that evidence is sufficient in amount, we allow it to overbear *all* the individual difficulties and perplexities which encompass the truths to which it is applied, unless, indeed, such difficulties can be *proved* to involve absolute contradictions; for these, of course, no evidence can substantiate. For example, in a multitude of cases, a certain combination of merely circumstantial evidence in favor of a certain judicial decision, is familiarly allowed to vanquish all apparent discrepancy on particular and subordinate points; — the want of concurrence in the evidence of the witnesses on such points shall not cause a shadow of a doubt as to the conclusion. For we feel that it is far more improbable that the conclusion should be untrue, than that the difficulty we cannot solve is truly incapable of a solution; and when the evidence reaches this point, the objection no longer troubles us.

It is the same with historic investigations. There are ten thousand facts in history which no one doubts, though the narrators of them may materially vary in their version, and though some of the circumstances alleged may be in appearance inexplicable. But the last thing a man would think of doing in such cases would be, to neglect the preponderant evidence on account of the residuum of insoluble objections. He does not, in short, allow his ignorance to control his knowledge, nor the evidence which he has not got, to destroy what he has; and the less so, that experience has taught him, that in many cases such apparent difficulties have been cleared up, in the course of time, and by the progress of knowledge, and proved to be contradictions in appearance only.

It is the same with the conclusions of natural philosophy, when well proved by experiment, however unaccountable for a while may be the discrepancy with apparently opposing phenomena. No one disbelieves the Copernican theory now, though thousands did for a while, on what they believed the irrefragable evidence of their senses. Now let us only suppose the Copernican theory not to have been discovered by human reason, but made known by revelation, and its reception enjoined on faith, leaving the apparent inconsistency with the evidence of the senses just as it was. Many, no doubt, would have said that no such evidence *could* justify them in disbelieving their own eyes, and that such an insoluble objection was sufficient to overturn the evidence. Yet we now see, in point of fact, that it is not only possible, but true, that the objection was apparent only, and admitted of a complete solution. Thousands accordingly take this for granted, without seeing it; they receive philosophy — this very philosophy — on testimony which apparently contradicts their senses, without even yet knowing more of it than if it *were* revealed from heaven. This gives too much reason to suspect, that in other and higher cases the *will* has much to do with human scepticism. Nor do we well know what multitudes, who neglect religion on account of the alleged uncertainty of its evidence, could reply, if God were to say to them: "And yet on *such* evidence, and that far inferior in degree, you have never hesitated to *act*, when your own temporal interests were concerned. You never feared to commit the bark of your worldly fortunes to that fluctuating element. In many cases you believed on the testimony of others what seemed even to contradict your own senses. Why were you so much more scrupulous in relation to ME?"

The above examples are fair illustrations, we venture to think, of the conditions under which we are required to believe the far higher truths, attended no doubt with great difficulties, which are authenticated in the pages of the two volumes (Nature and Scripture) which God has put into our hands to study; of the conditions to which he subjects us in training us for a future state, and developing in us the twofold perfection involved in the words "a reasonable faith." If the considerations just urged were duly borne in mind, we cannot help thinking that they would afford (where any modesty remained) an answer to most of those forms of unbelief which, from time to time, rise up in the world, and not least in our own day. These are usually founded on one or more supposed insoluble objections, arising out of our ignorance. The probability that they *are* incapable of solution is rashly assumed, and made to overbear the far stronger probability arising from the positive and appreciable evidence which substantiates the truths involving those difficulties : a course the more unreasonable, inasmuch as, first, many such difficulties might be *expected ;* and secondly, in analogous cases, we see that many such difficulties have in time disappeared. On the other hand, it is, no doubt, much more easy to insist on individual objections, which no man can effectually answer, than it is to appreciate at once the *total effect* of many lines of argument and many sources of evidence, all bearing on one point. That difficulty was long ago beautifully stated by Butler,* in a passage well worthy of the reader's perusal ; and, as Pascal had observed before him, not only is it difficult, but impossible, for the human mind to *retain* the impression of a large combination of evidence, even if it could for a moment fully realize the collective *effect* of the whole. But it cannot do even this, any more than the eye can take in at once, in mass and detail, the objects of an extensive landscape.

Let us now be permitted briefly to apply the preceding principles to two of the most momentous controversies which have exercised the minds of men ; that which relates to the existence of God, and that which relates to the truth of Christianity ; in both of which, if we mistake not, man's position is precisely similar. He is placed amidst evidence abundantly sufficient to justify his reasonable faith, and yet beset with difficulties abundantly sufficient to baffle an indocile reason.

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* "The truth of our religion, like the truth of common matters, is to be judged of by all the evidence taken together. And, unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies), then is the truth of it proved. . . . . . It is obvious how much advantage the nature of this evidence gives to those persons who attack Christianity, especially in conversation. For it is easy to show, in a short and lively manner, that such and such things are liable to objection, but impossible to show, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view." — *Analogy*, Part II. Chap. VII.

Without entering into the many different sources of argument for the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, we shall only refer to that proof on which all theists, savage and civilized, in some form or other, rely, — the traces of an "eternal power and godhead" in the visible creation. The argument depends on a principle which, whatever may be its metaphysical history or origin, is one which man perpetually recognizes, which every act of his own consciousness verifies, which he applies fearlessly to every phenomenon, known or unknown; and it is this, — That every effect has a cause (though he knows nothing of their connection), and that effects which bear marks of design have a designing cause. This principle is so familiar, that if he were to affect to doubt it, in any *practical* case in human life, he would only be laughed at as a fool, or pitied as insane. The evidence, then, which substantiates the greatest and first of truths mainly depends on a principle perfectly familiar and perfectly recognized. Man can estimate the *nature* of that evidence; and the *amount* of it, in this instance, he sees to be as vast as the sum of created objects; — nay, far more; for it is as vast as the sum of their relations. So that if (as is apt to be the case) the difficulties of realizing this tremendous truth are in proportion to the extent of knowledge and the powers of reflection, the evidence man can perfectly appreciate is cumulative in an equal or still higher proportion. Obvious as are the marks of design in each individual object, the sum of proof is not merely the sum of such indications, but that sum infinitely multiplied by the relations established and preserved amongst all these objects; by the adjustment which harmonizes them all into one system, and impresses on all the parts of the universe a palpable order and subordination. While even in a single part of an organized being (as a hand or an eye) the traces of design are not to be mistaken, these are indefinitely multiplied by similar proofs of contrivance in the many individual organs of one such being, — as of an entire animal or vegetable. These are yet to be multiplied by the harmonious relations which are established of mutual proportion and subserviency amongst all the organs of any one such being; and as many beings even of that one species or class as there are, so many multiples are there of the same proofs. Similar indications yield similar proofs of design in each individual *part*, and in the *whole* individual of *all* the individuals of every other class of beings; and this sum of proof is again to be multiplied by the proofs of design in the adjustment and mutual dependence and subordination of each of these *classes* of organized beings to every other, and to all; of the vegetable to the animal, — of the lower animal to the higher. Their magnitudes, numbers, physical force, faculties, functions, duration of life, rates of multiplication and development, sources of subsistence, must all have been determined in exact ratios, and could not transgress certain limits without involving the whole universe in confusion. This amazing sum of probabilities is yet to be further augmented by the fact, that all these classes of organized substances are intimately related to those great elements of the material world in which they live, to which they are adapted, and which are adapted to them; that all of them are subject to the influence of certain mighty and subtle agencies which pervade all nature, — and which are of such tremendous potency, that any *chance* error in their proportions of activity would be sufficient to destroy all, and which yet are exquisitely balanced and inscrutably harmonized.

The proofs of design arising from the relations thus maintained between all the parts, from the most minute to the most vast, of our own world, are still to be further multiplied by the inconceivably momentous relations subsisting between our own and other planets and their common centre; amidst whose sublime and solemn phenomena science has most clearly discovered that every thing is accurately adjusted by geometrical precision of force and movement; where the *chances* of error are infinite, and the proofs of intelligence, therefore, equal. These proofs of design in each fragment of the universe, and in all combined, are continually further multiplied by every fresh discovery, whether in the minute or the vast, — by the microscope or the telescope; for every fresh law that is discovered, being in harmony with all that has previously been discovered, not only yields its own proof of design, but infinitely more, by all the relations in which it stands to other laws: it yields, in fact, as many as there are adjustments which have been effected between itself and all besides. Each new proof of design, therefore, is not a solitary fact; but one which, entering as another element into a most complex machinery, indefinitely multiplies the combinations, in any one of which chance might have gone astray. From this infinite array of proofs of design, it seems to man's reason, in ordinary moods, stark madness to account for the phenomena of the universe upon any other supposition than that which does account, and can alone account, for them all, — the supposition of a Presiding Intelligence, illimitable alike in power and in wisdom.

The only difficulty is justly to appreciate such an argument, — to obtain a sufficiently vivid impression of such an accumulation of probabilities. This very difficulty, indeed, in some moods, may minister to a temporary doubt. For let us catch man in those moods, — perhaps after long meditation on the metaphysical grounds of human belief, — and he begins half to doubt, with unusual modesty, whether the child of dust is warranted to conclude *any thing* on a subject which loses itself in the infinite, and which so far transcends all his powers of apprehension; he begins half to doubt, with Hume, whether he can reason analogically from the petty specimens of human ingenuity to phenomena so vast and so unique; a misgiving which is strengthened by reflecting on all those to him incomprehensible inferences to which the *admission* of the argument leads him, and which seem almost to involve contradictions. Let him ponder for a while the difficulties involved in the notion of Self-subsistence, Eternity, Creation; of Power, Wisdom, and Knowledge, so unlimited as to embrace at once all things, and all their relations, actual and possible, — this "unlimited" expanding into a dim apprehension of the "infinite"; of infinitude of attributes, omnipresent in every point of space, and yet but one and not many infinitudes; — let him once humbly ponder such incomprehensible difficulties as these, and he will soon feel that, though in the argument from design there seemed but one vast scene of triumph for his reason, there is as large a scene of exertion left for his faith. That faith he ordinarily yields; he sees it is justified by those proofs of the great truth he can appreciate, and which he will not allow to be controlled by the difficulties his conscious feebleness cannot solve; and the rather, that he sees that, if he does *not* accept that evidence, he has equally incomprehensible difficulties still to encounter, and two or three stark contradictions into the bargain. His reason, therefore, triumphs in the proofs, and his faith triumphs over the difficulties.

It is the same with the doctrine of the Divine government of the world. In ordinary states of mind, man counts it an absurdity to suppose that the Deity would have created a world to abandon it; that, having employed wisdom and power so vast in its construction, he would leave it to be the sport of chance. He feels that the intuitions of right and wrong; the voice of conscience; satisfaction in well-doing; remorse for crime; the present *tendency*, at least, of the laws of the universe, — all point to the same conclusion, while their imperfect fulfilment equally points to a future and more accurate adjustment. Yet let the man look exclusively for a while on the opposite side of the tapestry; let him brood over any of the facts which seem at war with the above conclusion, — on some signal triumph of baseness and malignity; on oppressed virtue, on triumphant vice; on "the wicked spreading himself like a green bay tree"; and especially on the mournful and inscrutable mystery of the "Origin of Evil," — and he feels that "clouds and darkness" envelop the administration of the Moral Governor, though doubtless "justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." The evidences above mentioned for the last conclusion are direct and positive, and such as man can appreciate; the difficulties spring from his limited capacity, or imperfect glimpses of a very small segment of the universal plan. Nor are those difficulties less upon the opposite hypothesis; and they are there further burdened with two or three additional absurdities. The preponderant evidence, far from removing the difficulties, scarcely touches them; yet it is felt to be sufficient to *justify* faith, though most abundant faith is required still.

Are the evidences, then, in behalf of Christianity, *less* of a nature which man can appreciate; or *can* the difficulties involved in its reception be greater than in the preceding cases? If not, and if, moreover, while the evidence turns as before on principles with which we are familiar, the more formidable objections, as before, are such that we are not competent to decide upon their absolute insolubility, we see how man ought to act; that is, not to let his ignorance control his knowledge, but to let his reason accept the proofs which justify his faith in accepting the difficulties. In no case is he, it appears, warranted to look for the certainty which shall exclude (whatever the triumphs of his reason) a gigantic exercise of his faith. Let us briefly consider a few of the evidences. And in order to give the statement a little novelty, we shall indicate the principal topics of evidence, not by enumerating what the advocate of Christianity believes in believing it to be true, but what the infidel *must* believe in believing it to be false. The *à priori* objection to Miracles we shall briefly touch afterwards.

First, then, in relation to the Miracles of the New Testament, whether they be supposed masterly frauds on men's senses committed at the time and by the parties supposed in the records, or fictions (designed or accidental) subsequently fabricated, — but still, in either case, undeniably successful and triumphant beyond all else in the history whether of fraud or fiction, — the infidel must believe as follows: On the *first* hypothesis, he must believe that a vast number of apparent miracles, — involving the most astounding phenomena, — such as the instant restoration of the sick, blind, deaf, and lame, and the resurrection of the dead, — performed in open day, amidst multitudes of malignant enemies, — imposed alike on *all*, and triumphed at once over the strongest prejudices and the deepest enmity; — those who received them and those who rejected them differing only in the certainly not very trifling particular, as to whether they came from heaven or from hell. He must believe that those who were thus successful in this extraordinary conspiracy against men's senses and against common sense, were Galilean Jews, such as all history of the period represents them; ignorant, obscure, illiterate; and, above all, previously bigoted, like all their countrymen, to the very system, of which, together with all other religions on the earth, they modestly meditated the abrogation; — he must believe that, appealing to these astounding frauds in the face both of Jews and Gentiles as an open evidence of the truth of a new revelation, and demanding on the strength of them that *their* countrymen should surrender a religion which they acknowledged to be divine, and that all other nations should abandon their scarcely less venerable systems of superstition, they rapidly succeeded in both these very probable adventures; and in a few years, though without arms, power, wealth, or science, were to an enormous extent victorious over all prejudice, philosophy, and persecution; and in three centuries took nearly undisputed possession, amongst many nations, of the temples of the ejected deities. He must further believe that the original performers, in these prodigious frauds on the world, acted not only without any assignable motive, but against all assignable motive; that they maintained this uniform constancy in unprofitable falsehoods, not only together, but separately, in different countries, before different tribunals, under all sorts of examinations and cross-examinations, and in defiance of the gyves, the scourge, the axe, the cross, the stake; that those whom they persuaded to join their enterprise persisted like themselves in the same obstinate belief of the same "cunningly devised" frauds; and though they had many accomplices in their singular conspiracy, had the equally singular fortune to free themselves and their coadjutors from all transient weakness towards their cause and treachery towards one another; and, lastly, that these men, having, amidst all their ignorance, originality enough to invent the most pure and sublime system of morality which the world has ever listened to, had, amidst all their conscious villany, the effrontery to preach it, and, which is more extraordinary, the inconsistency to practise it! *

On the *second* of the above-mentioned hypotheses, that these miracles were either a congeries of deeply contrived fictions, or accidental myths, subsequently fabricated, the infidel must believe, on the *former* supposition, that, though even transient success in literary forgery, when there are any prejudices to resist, is among the rarest of occurrences, yet that *these* forgeries, the hazardous work of many minds, making the most outrageous pretensions, and necessarily challenging the opposition of Jew and Gentile, were successful, beyond all imagination, over the hearts of mankind; and have continued to impose, by an exquisite appearance of heartless truth, and a most elaborate mosaic of feigned events artfully cemented into the ground of true history, on the acutest mindsof different races and different ages; while, on the *second* supposition, he must believe that accident and chance have given to these legends their exquisite appearance of historic plausibility; and on *either* supposition, he must believe (what is infinitely more wonderful) that the world, while the fictions were being published, and in the known absence of the facts they asserted to be true, suffered itself to be befooled *into* the belief of their truth, and *out* of its belief of all the systems it *did* previously believe to be true; and that it acted thus notwithstanding persecution from without, as well as prejudice from within; that, strange to say, the strictest historic investigations bring this compilation of fictions or myths — even by the admission of Strauss himself — within thirty or forty years of the very time in which all the alleged wonders they relate are said to have occurred; wonders which the perverse world knew it had *not* seen, but which it was determined to believe, in spite of evidence, prejudice, and perscution! In addition to all this, the infidel must believe that the men who were engaged in the compilation of these monstrous fictions, chose them as the vehicle of the purest morality; and, though the most pernicious deceivers of mankind, were yet the most scrupulous teachers of veracity and benevolence! Surely of him who can receive all these paradoxes, — and they form but a small part of what might be mentioned, — we may say, "O infidel, great is thy Faith!"

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* So far as we have any knowledge from history, this must have been the case; and Gibbon fully admits and insists upon it. Indeed, no infidel hypothesis can *afford* to do without the *virtues* of the early Christians in accounting for the success of the *falsehoods* of Christianity. Hard alternatives of a wayward hypothesis!

On the supposition that neither of these theories, whether of fraud or fiction, will account, if taken by itself, for the whole of the supernatural phenomena which strew the pages of the New Testament, then the objector, who relies on *both*, must believe, in turn, *both* sets of the above paradoxes; and then, with still more reason than before, may we exclaim, "O infidel, great is thy Faith!"

Again; he must believe that *all* those apparent coincidences, which *seem* to connect Prophecy with the *facts* of the origin and history of Christianity, — some embracing events too vast for hazardous speculation, and others, incidents too minute for it, — are purely fortuitous; that *all* the cases in which the event seems to tally with the prediction are mere chance coincidences: and he must believe this, amongst other events, of two of the most *unlikely* to which human sagacity was *likely* to pledge itself, and yet which have as undeniably occurred (and *after* the predictions) as they were *à priori* improbable and anomalous in the world's history! The one is, that the Jews should exist as a distinct nation in the very bosom of all other nations, without extinction and without amalgamation, — other nations and even races having so readily melted away under less than half the influences which have been at work upon them;* the other, an opposite paradox, that a religion, propagated by ignorant, obscure, and penniless vagabonds, should diffuse itself amongst the most diverse nations in spite of all opposition, — it being the rarest of phenomena to find *any* religion which is capable of transcending the limits of race, clime, and the scene of its historic origin; a religion which, if transplanted, will not die; a religion which is more than a local or national growth of superstition! That *such* a religion as Christianity should so easily break these barriers, and, though supposed to be cradled in ignorance, fanaticism, and fraud, should, without force of arms, and in the face of persecution, "ride forth conquering and to conquer" through a long career of victories, defying the power of kings, and emptying the temples of deities, — who, but an *infidel*, has *faith* enough to believe? †

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* The case of the Gypsies, often alleged as a parallel, is a ludicrous evasion of the argument. These few and scattered vagabonds, whose very safety has been obscurity and contempt, have never attracted towards them a thousandth part of the attention, or the hundred-thousandth part of the cruelties, which have been directed against the Jews. Had it been otherwise, they would long since have melted away from every country in Europe. We repeat, that the existence of a nation for eighteen hundred years in the bosom of all nations, conquered and persecuted, yet never extinguished, and the propagation of a religion amongst *different* races without force, and even against it, — are both, so far as known, paradoxes in history.

† "They may say," says Butler, "that the conformity between the prophecies and the event is by accident; but there are many instances

Once more; if, from the external evidences of this religion, we pass to those which the only records by which we know any thing of its nature and origin supply, the infidel must believe, amongst other paradoxes, that it is *probable* that a knot of obscure and despised plebeians — regarded as the scum of a nation which was itself regarded as the scum of all other nations — originated the purest, most elevated, and most *influential* theory of ethics the world has ever seen; that a system of sublimest truth, expressed with unparalleled simplicity, sprang from ignorance; that precepts enjoining the most refined sanctity were inculcated by imposture; that the first injunctions to universal love broke from the lips of bigotry! He must further believe, that these men exemplified the ideal perfection of that beautiful system in the most unique, original, and faultless picture of virtue ever conceived, — a picture which has extorted the admiration even of those who could not believe it to be a *portrait*, and who have yet confessed themselves unable to account for it *except* as such.* He must believe, too, that these ignorant and fraudulent Galileans voluntarily aggravated the difficulty of their task, by exhibiting their proposed ideal, not by bare enumeration and description of qualities, but by the most arduous of all meth-

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in which such conformity itself cannot be denied." His whole remarks on the subject, and especially those on the *impression* to be derived from the *multitude* of apparent coincidences, in a long series of prophecies, some vast, some minute; and the improbability of their all being accidental, are worthy of his comprehensive genius. It is on the effect of the whole, not on single coincidences, that the argument depends.

* To Christ alone, of all the characters ever portrayed to man, belongs that assemblage of qualities which *equally* attract love and veneration; to him alone belong in perfection those rare traits which the Roman historian, with affectionate flattery, attributes too absolutely to the merely mortal object of his eulogy: "Nec illi, quod est rarissimum, aut facilitas auctoritatem, aut severitas amorem, deminuit." Still more beautiful is the Apostle's description of superiority to all human failings, with ineffable pity for human sorrows: "He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, though without sin."

ods of representation, — that of dramatic action; and, what is more, that they succeeded; that in that representation they undertook to make him act with sublime consistency in scenes of the most extraordinary character and the most touching pathos, and utter moral truth in the most exquisite fictions in which such truth was ever embodied; and that again they succeeded; that so ineffably rich in genius were these obscure wretches, that no less than *four* of them were found equal to this intellectual achievement; and while each has told many events and given many traits which the others have omitted, that they have all performed their task in the same unique style of invention and the same unearthly tone of art; that one and all, while preserving each his own individuality, has, nevertheless, attained a certain majestic simplicity of style unlike any thing else, not only in any writings of their own nation, *except* their alleged sacred writings, and infinitely superior to any thing which their successors, Jews or Christians, though with the advantage of these models, could ever attain, but unlike any acknowledged human writings in the world, and possessing the singular property of being capable of ready transfusion, without the loss of a thought or a grace, into every language spoken by man: he must believe that these fabricators of fiction, in common with the many other contributors to the New Testament, most insanely added to the difficulty of their task by delivering the whole in fragments and in the most various kinds of composition, — in biography, history, travels, and familiar letters; incorporating and interfusing with the whole an amazing number of minute facts, historic allusions, and specific references to persons, places, and dates, as if for the very purpose of supplying posterity with the easy means of detecting their impositions: he must believe that, in spite of their thus encountering what Paley calls the "danger of scattering names and circumstances in writings where nothing but truth can preserve consistency," they so happily succeeded, that whole volumes have been employed in pointing out their latent and often most recondite congruities; many of them lying so deep, and coming out after such comparison of various passages and collateral lights, that they could never have answered the purposes of fraud, even if the most prodigious genius for fraud had been equal to the fabrication; congruities which, in fact, were never suspected to exist till they were expressly elicited by the attacks of infidelity, and were evidently never thought of by the writers: he must believe that they were profoundly sagacious enough to construct such a fabric of artful harmonies, and yet such simpletons as, by doing infinitely more than was necessary, to encounter infinite risks of detection, to no purpose; sagacious enough to outdo all that sagacity has ever done, as shown by the effects, and yet not sagacious enough to be merely *specious:* and finally, he must believe that these illiterate impostors had the art, in all their various writings, which evidently proceed from different minds, to preserve the same inimitable marks of reality, truth, and nature, in their narrations, — the miraculous and the ordinary alike, — and to assume and preserve, with infinite ease, amidst their infinite impostures, the tone and air of undissembled earnestness.*

If, on the other hand, he supposes that all the congruities of which we have spoken were the effect, not of fraudulent design, but of happy accident, — that these *myths* arranged themselves in spontaneous harmony, — he must believe that chance has done what even the most prodigious powers of invention could not do.

Once more; he must believe that these same illiterate men, who were capable of so much, were also capable of projecting a system of doctrine singularly remote from all ordinary and previous speculation; of discerning the necessity of taking under their special patronage those *passive* virtues which man least loved, and found it most difficult to cultivate; and of exhibiting, in their preference of the spiritual to the ceremonial, and their treatment of many of the most delicate questions of practical ethics and casuistry, a justness and elevation of sentiment as alien as possible from the superstition and fanaticism of their predecessors who had corrupted the Law, and the superstition and fanaticism of their followers, who very soon corrupted the Gospel; that they, and they alone, rose above the strong tendencies to the extravagances which had been so conspicuous during the past, and were soon to be as conspicuous in the future. These and a thousand other paradoxes (arising out of the supposition that Christianity is the fraudulent or fictitious product of such an age, country, and, above all, such men as the problem limits us to) must the infidel receive, and receive all at once; and of him who *can* receive them we can but once more declare, that, so far from having no "faith," he rather possesses the "faith" which removes "mountains"! — only it appears that his faith, like that of Rome or of Oxford, is a faith which excludes reason.

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* Was there ever in truth a man who could read the appeals of Paul to his converts, and doubt either that the letters were real, or that the man was in earnest? We scarcely venture to think it.

On the other hand, to him who accepts Christianity, none of these paradoxes present themselves. On the supposition of the truth of the miracles and the prophecies, he does not wonder at its origin or success: and as little does he wonder at all the literary and intellectual achievements of its early chroniclers, if their elevation of sentiment was from a divine source, and if the artlessness, harmony, and reality of their narratives was the simple effect of the consistency of truth, and of transcription from the life.

Now, on the other hand, what are the chief objections which reconcile the infidel to his enormous burden of paradoxes, and which appear to the Christian far less invincible than the paradoxes themselves? They are, especially with all modern infidelity, chiefly founded on the *à priori* improbability of the doctrines revealed, and of the miracles which sustain them. Now, here we come to the very distinction on which we have already insisted, and which is so much insisted on by Butler. The evidence which *sustains* Christianity is all such as man is competent to consider; and is precisely of the same nature as that which enters into his every-day calculations of probability; while the objections spring entirely from our ignorance and presumption. They suppose that we know more of the modes of the Divine administration, — of what God may have permitted, of what is possible and impossible, of the ultimate development of an imperfectly developed system, and of its relations to the entire universe, — than we do or can know.*

Of these objections, the most widely felt and the most specious, especially in our day, is the assumption that miracles are an *impossibility;* † and yet we will venture to say that there is none more truly unphilosophical. That miracles are *improbable*, viewed in relation to the experience of the individual or of the mass of men, is granted; for if they were not, they would, as Paley says, be no miracles; an every-day miracle is none. But that they are either impossible, or so improbable that, if they *were* wrought, no evidence could establish them, is another matter. The first allegation involves a curious limitation of Omnipotence; and the second affirms, in *effect*, that, if God were to work a miracle, it would still be our duty to disbelieve him!

We repeat our firm conviction, that this *à priori* presumption against miracles is but a vulgar illusion of one of Bacon's *idola tribûs.* So far from being disposed to admit the principle that a "miracle is an impossibility," we shall venture on what may seem to some a paradox, but which we are convinced is a truth, — that the time will come, and is coming, when even those who shall object to the *evidence* which sustains the Christian miracles will acknowledge that philosophy *requires* them to admit that men have no ground whatever to dogmatize on the antecedent impossibility of miracles in general; and that not merely because, if theists at all, they will see the absurdity of this assertion, while they admit that the present order of things had a *beginning;* and, if Christians at all, the equal absurdity of the assertion, while they admit that it will have *an end;* — not only because the geologist will have familiarized the world with the idea of successive interventions, and, in fact, distinct creative acts, having all the nature of miracles; — not only, we say, for these special reasons, but for a more general one. The true philosopher will see, that, with his limited experience and that of all his contemporaries, he has no right to dogmatize about all that may have been permitted, or will be permitted, in the Divine administration of the universe. He will see that those who with one voice denied, about half a century ago, the existence of aerolites, and summarily dismissed all the alleged facts as a silly fable, because it contradicted *their* experience, — that those who refused to admit the Copernican theory, because, as they said, it manifestly contradicted *their* experience, — that the schoolboy who refuses to admit the first law of motion, because, as he says, it gives the lie to all *his* experience, — that the Oriental prince (whose scepticism Hume vainly attempts, on his principle, to meet) who denied the possibility of ice, because it contradicted *his* experience, — and, in the same manner, that the men who, with Dr. Strauss, lay down the dictum that a miracle is *impossible*, and a *contradiction*, because it contradicts *their* experience, — have all been alike contravening the first principles of the modest philosophy of Bacon, and have fallen into one of the most ordinary illusions against which he has warned us; namely, that that cannot be true which seems in contradiction to our *own* experience. We confidently predict that the day will come, when the favorite argument of many a so-called philosopher in this matter will be felt to be the philosophy of the vulgar only; and that though many may, even then, deny that the testimony which supports the Scripture miracles is equal to the task, they will all alike abandon the axiom which supersedes the necessity even of examining such evidence, by asserting that no evidence can establish them.

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* The possible implication of Christianity with distant regions of the universe, and the dim hints which Scripture seems to throw out as to such implication, are beautifully treated in the 4th, 5th, and 6th of Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses"; and we need not tell the reader of Butler how much he insists upon similar considerations.

† It is, as we shall see, the avowed axiom of Strauss; he even acknowledges that, if it be not true, he would not think it worth while to discredit the history of the Evangelists; that is, the history *must* be discredited, because he has resolved that a miracle is an impossibility.

While on this subject, we may notice a certain fantastical tone of depreciation of miracles as an evidence of Christianity, which is occasionally adopted even by some who do not deny the possibility or probability, or even the fact, of their occurrence. They affirm them to be of little moment, and represent them — with an exquisite affectation of metaphysical propriety — as totally incapable of convincing men of any *moral truth;* upon the ground that there is no natural relation between any displays of *physical power* and any such truth. Now, without denying that the nature of the doctrine is *a* criterion,* and must be taken into account in judging of the reality of any alleged miracle, we have just two things to reply to this: first, that (as Paley says in relation to the question, whether *any* accumulation of testimony can establish a miraculous fact) we are content "to try the theorem upon a simple case," and affirm that man is so constituted, that if he himself sees the blind restored to sight, and the dead raised, under such circumstances as exclude all doubt of fraud on the part of others, and all mistake on his own, he will uniformly associate authority with such displays of superhuman power; which, in fact, he has uniformly done, whenever he has, however falsely, attributed such power: and, secondly, that the notion in question is in direct contravention of the language and spirit of Christ himself, who *expressly* suspends his claims to men's belief, and the authority of his doctrines, on the fact of his miracles. "The *works* that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." "If ye believe not me, believe *my works*." "If I had not come among them, *and done the works which none other man did*, they had not had sin."

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* The alleged reasoning in a circle, from the doctrine to the miracle, and from the miracle to the doctrine, is a favorite retort of infidelity. It is, in fact, no more a vicious circle than is involved in the great argument for theism; that is, none at all. In the *latter* case, the works of creation prove power and wisdom, and their immensely prevailing characteristics also infer goodness. That immense preponderance of proof leads us to extend thetinference to the residuum of phenomena which, if they existed *alone*, might imply a malevolent origin, or furnish, owing to our ignorance, no decisive indications at all. It is the same with miracles; their prevailing — in the case of the New Testament, we may well say their uniform — characteristics will show clearly enough whether they originated with a malignant or a benevolent source; and the same may be said of the obvious character of that *portion* of the doctrines the nature and bearing of which we can appreciate. Having been thus proved (if really wrought) to come from heaven and not from hell, miracles will, in their turn, legitimately authenticate that portion of the doctrines of which (as in the case of the natural phenomena above mentioned) we are incompetent, from our ignorance, to judge, or which, like some of those same phenomena, might, if taken alone, seem to afford opposite indications.

We have enumerated some of the paradoxes which infidelity is required to believe; and the old-fashioned, open, intelligible infidelity of the last century accepted them, and rejected Christianity accordingly. That was a self-consistent, simple, ingenuous thing, compared with those monstrous forms of credulous reason, incredulous faith, metaphysical mysticism, even Christian Pantheism, so many varieties of which have sprung out of the incubation of German rationalism and German philosophy upon the New Testament. The advocates of these systems, after adopting the most formidable of the above paradoxes of infidelity, and (notwithstanding the frequent boast of *originality*) depending mainly on the same objections, and defending them by the very same critical arguments,* delude themselves with the idea, that they have purified and embalmed Christianity ; not aware that they have first made a mummy of it. They are so greedy of paradox, that they, in fact, aspire to be Christians and infidels at the same time. Proclaiming the miracles of Christianity to be *illusions* of imagination or *mythical* legends, and the inspiration of its records no other or greater than that of Homer's "Iliad," or even Æsop's "Fables"; — rejecting the whole of that supernatural element with which the only records which can tell us any thing about the matter are full ; — declaring its whole history so uncertain, that the ratio of truth to error must be a vanishing fraction ; — the advocates of these systems yet proceed to rant and rave — they are really the only words we know which can express our sense of their absurdity — in a most edifying vein about the divinity of Christianity, and to reveal to us its *true* glories. "Christ," says Strauss, "is not an individual, but an *idea ;* that is to say, *humanity.* In the *human race* behold the God-made-man ! behold the child of the visible virgin and the invisible Father ! — *that is*, of matter and of mind ; behold the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Sinless One ; behold him who dies, who is raised again, who mounts into the heavens ! Believe in *this* Christ ! In his death, his resurrection, man is justified before God !"* Well may Mül-

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* The main *objection*, both with the old and the new forms of infidelity, is that against the *miracles;* the main *arguments* with both, those

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which attempt to show their *antecedent impossibility;* and *criticism* directed against the credibility of the records which contain them. The principal *difference* is that modern infidelity shrinks from the coarse imputation of fraud and imposture on the founders of Christianity ; and prefers the theory of *illusion* or *myth* to that of deliberate fraud. But, with this exception, which touches only the personal character of the founders of Christianity, the case remains the same. The same postulates and the same arguments are made to yield substantially the same conclusion. For all that is supernatural in Christianity, and all credibility in its records, vanish equally on either assumption. Nor is even the modern *mode* of interpreting many of the miracles (as illusions or legends) unknown to the elder infidelity ; only it more consistently felt that neither the one theory nor the other could be trusted to *alone.* *Velis et remis* was its motto.

* Such is Quinet's brief statement of Strauss's mystico-mythical Chris-

ler say, "And these insipidities of Pantheism we are to accept as the genuine interpretation of the evangelic history!" Some, indeed, do not hesitate to say that Strauss himself never believed these absurdities; and they say so in compassion to his understanding. They affirm that he said these things merely to cover his infidelity. They say that one so acute could not really believe such nonsense; or that, if he did, he must be thought acute no more. But if they thus save his understanding, it is at the expense of his honesty. It would prove, not only that Dr. Strauss is critical, and not seldom hypercritical, but also hypocritical. It must be confessed, however, that the flagitious manner in which, at the conclusion of his book, he has discussed the question, whether a man, in his own predicament, may not occupy the place of a Christian preacher and pastor to a congregation of ordinary Christians, taking care not to let them penetrate his disguise, gives too much reason for the imputation. It is awkward, certainly, when a man will so act as to give to the world only the alternative of inferring that he has either lost his wits, or lost his integrity.*

But whether it be the Rationalism of Paulus, or the Rationalism of Strauss, — whether that which declares all that is supernatural in Christianity (forming the bulk of its history) to be illusion, or that which declares it myth, — the conclusions can be made out only by a system of interpretation, which can be compared to nothing but the wildest dreams and allegorical systems of some of the early Fathers; † while the

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tianity, founded on the Hegelian philosophy. For a fuller, we dare not say a more intelligible, account of it, in Strauss's own words, and the metaphysical mysteries on which it depends, the reader may consult Dr. Beard's translation; — pp. 44, 45 of his Essay, entitled "Strauss, Hegel, and their Opinions."

* See Appendix, No. I.

† Of the mode of accounting for the supernatural occurrences in the Scriptures by the illusion produced by mistaken natural phenomena (perhaps the most stupidly jejune of all the theories ever projected by man), Quinet eloquently says: "The pen which wrote the Provincial

results themselves are either those elementary principles of ethics for which there was no need to invoke a revelation at all, or some mystico-metaphysical philosophy, expressed in language as unintelligible as the veriest gibberish of the Alexandrian Platonists. In fact, by such exegesis and by such philosophy, any thing may be made out of any thing; and the most fantastical data be compelled to yield equally fantastical conclusions.

But the first and most natural question to ask is obviously this: "How any mortal can pretend to extract *any thing* certain, much more *divine*, from records, the great bulk of which he has reduced to pure frauds, illusions, or legends, — and the great bulk of the remainder to an absolute uncertainty of how little is true, and how much false?* Surely it would need nothing less than a new revelation to reveal this sweeping restriction of the old; and we should even then be left in an ecstasy of astonishment, — first, that the whole significance of it should have been veiled in frauds, illusions, or fictions; secondly, that its true meaning should have been hidden from the world for eighteen hundred years

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Letters would be necessary to lay bare the strange consequences of this theology. According to its conclusion, the tree of good and evil was nothing but a venomous plant, probably a manchineal tree, under which our first parents fell asleep. The shining face of Moses on the heights of Mount Sinai was the natural result of electricity; the vision of Zachariah was effected by the smoke of the chandeliers in the temple; the Magian kings, with their offerings of myrrh, of gold, and of incense, were three wandering merchants, who brought some glittering tinsel to the Child of Bethlehem; the star which went before them, a servant bearing a flambeau; the angels in the scene of the temptation, a caravan traversing the desert, laden with provisions; the two angels in the tomb, clothed in white linen, an illusion caused by a linen garment; the Transfiguration, a storm." Who would not sooner be an old-fashioned infidel than such a doting and maundering rationalist?

[*] Daub naively enough declares, that "if you except all that relates to angels, demons, and miracles, there is scarcely *any* mythology in the Gospel." An exception which reminds one of the Irish prelate, who, on reading "Gulliver's Travels," remarked that there were *some* things in that book which he *could not think true.*

after its divine promulgation ; thirdly, that it should be *revealed* at last, either in results which needed no revelation to reveal them, or in the Egyptian darkness of the allegorico-metaphysico-mystico-logico-transcendental " formulæ " of the most obscure and contentious philosophy ever devised by man ; and lastly, that all this superfluous trouble is to give us, after all, only the mysteries of a most enigmatical philosophy : for of Hegel in particular, we think it may with truth be said, that the reader is seldom fortunate enough to *know* that he *knows* his meaning, or even to know that Hegel knew his own.

Whether, then, we regard the original compilers of the evangelic records as inventing all that Paulus or Strauss rejects, or sincerely believing their own delusions ; or hold that their statements have been artfully corrupted or unconsciously disguised, till Christ and his Apostles are as effectually transformed and travestied as such dreamers are pleased to imagine, with what consistency can we believe any thing certain amidst so many acknowledged fictions inseparably incorporated with it ? If A has told B truth once and falsehood fifty times (wittingly or unwittingly), what can induce B to believe that he has any reason to believe A in that only time in which he *does* believe him, unless he knows the same truth by evidence quite independent of A, and for which he is not in debted to him at all ? Should we not, then, at once acknowledge the futility of attempting to educe any certain historic fact, however meagre, or any doctrine, whether intelligible or obscure, from documents nine tenths of which are to be rejected as a tissue of absurd fictions ? Or why should we not fairly confess that, for aught we can tell, the *whole* is a fiction ? For certainly, as to the amount of historic fact which these men affect to leave, it is obviously a matter of the most trivial importance whether we regard the whole Bible as absolute fiction or not. Whether an obscure Galilean teacher, who taught a moral system which may have been as good (we can never *know* from such corrupt documents that it *was* as good) as that of Confucius, or Zoroaster, ever lived or not; and whether we are to add another name to those who have enunciated the elementary truths of ethics, is really of very little moment. Upon their principles we can clearly *know* nothing about him, except that he is the centre of a vast mass of fictions, the invisible nucleus of a huge conglomerate of myths. A thousand times more, therefore, do we respect those, as both more honest and more logical, who, on similar grounds, openly reject Christianity altogether; and who regard the New Testament, and speak of it, exactly as they would of Homer's "Iliad," or Virgil's "Æneid." Such men, consistently enough, trouble themselves not at all in ascertaining what residuum of truth, historical or ethical, may remain in a book which certainly gives ten falsehoods for one truth, and welds both together in undistinguishable confusion. The German infidels, on the other hand, with infinite labor, and amidst infinite uncertainties, extract either truth "as old as the creation," and as universal as human reason, — or truth which, after being hidden from the world for eighteen hundred years in mythical obscurity, is unhappily lost again the moment it is discovered, in the infinitely deeper darkness of the philosophy of Hegel and Strauss; who in vain endeavor to gasp out, in articulate language, the still latent mystery of the Gospel! Hegel, in his last hours, is *said* to have said, — and if he did not say, he *ought* to have said, — Alas! there is but one man in all Germany who understands my doctrine, — and *he* does not understand it! And yet, by his account, Hegelianism and Christianity, "in their highest results," [language, as usual, felicitously obscure,] "are one." Both therefore are, alas! now for ever lost.

That great problem, to account for the origin and establishment of Christianity in the world with a denial at the same time of its miraculous pretensions, — a problem, the fair solution of which is obviously incumbent on infidelity, — has necessitated the most gratuitous and even contradictory hypotheses, and may safely be said still to present as hard a knot as ever. The favorite hypothesis, recently, has been that of Strauss, — frequently remodified and readjusted, indeed, by himself, — that Christianity is a *myth*, or collection of myths; that is, a conglomerate (as geologists would say) of a very slender portion of facts and truth, with an enormous accretion of undesigned fiction, fable, and superstitions; gradually framed and insensibly received, like the mythologies of Greece and Rome, or the ancient systems of Hindoo theology. It is true, indeed, that the particular *critical* arguments, the alleged historic discrepancies, and so forth, on which this author founds his conclusions, are, for the most part, not original; most of them having been insisted on before, both in Germany and more especially in our own country, during the Deistical controversies of the preceding century. His idea of myths, however, may be supposed original; and he is very welcome to it. For of all the attempted solutions of the great problem, this will be hereafter regarded as, perhaps, the most untenable. Gibbon, in solving the same problem, and starting in fact from the same axioms, — for he too endeavored to account for the intractable phenomenon from natural causes alone, — assigned as one cause, the *reputation* of working miracles, the reality of which he denied; but he was far too cautious to decide whether the original founders of Christianity had pretended to work miracles, and had been enabled to cheat the world into the belief of them, or whether the world had been pleased universally to cheat itself into that belief. He was far too wise to tie himself to the proof, that in the most enlightened period of the world's history, — amidst the strongest contrarieties of national and religious feeling, — amidst the bitterest bigotry of millions in behalf of what was old, and the bitterest contempt of millions for all that was new, — amidst the opposing forces of ignorance and prejudice on the one hand and philosophy and scepticism on the other, — amidst all the persecutions which attested and proved those hostile feelings on the part of the bulk of mankind, —

and, above all, in the short space of thirty or forty years (which is all that Dr. Strauss allows himself), — Christianity *could* be thus deposited, like the mythologies of Greece or Rome! These, Gibbon well knew, were very gradual and silent formations; originating in the midst of a remote antiquity and an unhistoric age, during the very infancy and barbarism of the races which adopted them, and confined, be it remembered, to those races *alone;* he knew that they display, instead of the exquisite and symmetrical beauty of Christianity, those manifest signs of gradual accretion which were fairly to be expected; in the varieties of the deposited or irrupted substances, — in the diffracted appearance of various parts, — in the very weather-stains, so to speak, which mark the whole mass.

That the prodigious aggregate of miracles, which the New Testament asserts, would, if fabulous, pass unchallenged, elude all detection, and baffle all scepticism, — collect in the course of a few years energetic and zealous assertors of their reality, in the heart of every civilized and almost every barbarous community, and in the course of three centuries change the face of the world, and destroy every other *myth* which fairly came in contact with it, — who but Strauss can believe? Was there no Dr. Strauss in those days? None to question and detect, as the process went on, the utter baselessness of those legends? Was all the world doting, — was even the *persecuting* world asleep? Were all mankind resolved on befooling themselves? Are men wont thus quietly to admit miraculous pretensions, whether they be prejudiced votaries of another system, or sceptics as to all? No: whether we consider the age, the country, the men assigned for the origin of these *myths*, we see the futility of the theory. It does not account even for their origination, much less for their success. We see that, if any mythology could in such an age have germinated at all, it must have been one very different from Christianity; whether we consider the sort of Messiah the Jews expected, or the hatred of *all* Jewish Messiahs which the Gentiles could not but have felt. The Christ offered them, so far from being welcome, was to the one a "stumbling-block" and to the other "foolishness."

Let us suppose a parallel *myth*, — if so we may abuse the name. Let us suppose the son of some Canadian carpenter aspiring to be a moral teacher, but neither working nor *pretending* to work miracles; as much hated by his countrymen as Jesus Christ was hated by his, and both he and his countrymen as much hated by all the civilized world beside, as were Jesus Christ and the Jews: let us further suppose him forbidding his followers the use of all force in propagating his doctrines, and then let us calculate the probability of an unnoticed and accidental *deposit*, in thirty short years, of a prodigious accumulation, about these simple facts, of supernatural but universally accredited fables; these legends escaping detection or suspicion as they accumulated, and suddenly laying hold in a very little time of myriads of votaries in all parts of both worlds, and in three centuries uprooting and destroying Christianity and all opposing systems! How long will it be before the Swedenborgian, or the Mormonite, or any such pretenders, will have similar success? Have there not been a thousand such, and has any one of them had the slightest chance against *systems in possession*, — against the strongly rooted prejudices of ignorance and the Argus-eyed investigations of scepticism? But these prejudices of ignorance and this vigilance of scepticism were both opposed to the pretensions of Christianity; nor can any one example of at all similar and sudden success be alleged, except in the case of Mahomet; and to that the answer is brief. The history of Mahomet is the history of a conqueror, — and his logic was the logic of the sword.

In spite of the theory of Strauss, therefore, not less than that of Gibbon, the old and ever-recurring difficulty of giving a rational account of the origin and establishment of Christianity still presents itself for solution to the infidel, as it always has done, and, we venture to say, always will do. It is an insoluble phenomenon, except by the admission of the facts of the New Testament. "The miracles," says Butler, "are a satisfactory account of the events, of which *no other satisfactory* account can be given: nor any account at all, but what is imaginary merely and invented."

In the mean time, the different theories of unbelief mutually refute one another; and we may plead the authority of one against the authority of another. Those who believe Strauss believe both the theory of imposture and the theory of illusion improbable; and those who believe in the theory of imposture believe the theory of myths improbable. And both parties, we are glad to think, are quite right in the judgment they form of one another.

But what must strike every one who reflects as the most surprising thing in Dr. Strauss is, that, with the postulatum with which he sets out, and which he modestly takes for granted as too evident to need proof, he should have thought it worth while to write two bulky volumes of minute criticism on the subject. A miracle he declares to be an absurdity, a contradiction an impossibility. If *we* believed this, we should deem a very concise enthymem (after having *proved* that postulatum though) all that was necessary to construct on the subject. A miracle *cannot* be true; *ergo*, Christianity, which in the only records by which we know any thing about it avows its absolute dependence upon miracles, must be false.*

It is a modification of one or other of these monstrous forms of unbelieving belief and Christian infidelity, that Mr. Foxton, late of Oxford, has adopted in his "Popular Christianity"; as perhaps also Mr. Froude in his "Nemesis." It is not very easy, indeed, to say what Mr. Foxton positively believes; having, in common with his German prototypes, a greater facility of telling us what he does *not* believe, and of wrapping up what he does believe in a most impregnable mysticism. He certainly rejects, however, all that which, when rejected a century ago, left, in the estimate of every one, an infidel *in puris naturalibus.* Like his German acquaintances, he accepts the infidel paradoxes, — only, like them, he will still be a Christian. He believes, with Strauss, that a miracle is an impossibility and contradiction, — "incredible *per se.*" As to the inspiration of Christ, he regards it as, in its nature, the same as that of Zoroaster, Confucius, Mahomet, Plato, Luther, and Wickliffe, — a curious assortment of "heroic souls." * With a happy art of confusing the "gifts of genius," no matter whether displayed in intellectual or moral power, and of forgetting that other men are not likely to overlook the difference, he declares "the wisdom of Solomon and the poetry of Isaiah the fruit of the *same* inspiration which is *popularly* attributed to Milton or Shakspeare, or even to the homely wisdom of Benjamin Franklin"; † in the same pleasant confusion of mind, he thinks that the "pens of Plato, of Paul, and of Dante, the pencils of Raphael and of Claude, the chisels of Canova and of Chantrey, no less than the voices of Knox, of Wickliffe, and of Luther, are ministering instruments, in different degrees, of the same spirit." ‡ "We find," he says, "both in the writers and the records of Scripture, every evidence of human infirmity that can possibly be conceived; and yet we are to believe that God himself specially inspired them with false philosophy, vicious logic, and bad grammar!" § He denies the originality both of the Christian ethics (which, he says, are a gross plagiarism from Plato), as also in great part of the system of Christian doctrine. || Nevertheless, it would be quite a mistake, it seems,

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* For some further remarks on Dr. Strauss's work, see Appendix, No. I.

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* Pp. 62, 63. † P. 72. ‡ P. 77. § P. 74.

|| Pp. 51 - 60. We are hardly likely to yield to Mr. Foxton in our love of Plato, for whom we have expressed, and that very recently (April, 1848), no stinted admiration: and what we have there affirmed we are by no means disposed to retract, — that no ancient author has approached, in the expression of ethical truth, so near to the maxims, and sometimes the very expressions, of the Gospel. Nevertheless, we as strongly affirm, that he who contrasts (whatever the occasional sublimity of ex-

to suppose that Mr. Foxton is no Christian! He is, on the contrary, among the very few who can tell us what Christianity really is, and who can separate the falsehoods and the myths

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pression) the faltering and often sceptical tone of Plato on religious subjects with the uniformity and decision of the Evangelical system, — his dark notions in relation to God (candidly confessed) with the glorious recognition of him in the Gospel as "our Father," — his utterly absurd application of his general principles of morals, in his most Utopian of all Republics, with the broad, plain, social ethics of Christianity, — the tone of mournful familiarity (whatever his personal immunity) in which he too often speaks of the saddest pollutions that ever degraded humanity, with the spotless purity of the Christian rule of life, — the hesitating, speculative tone of the Master of the Academy with the decision and majesty of Him who "spake with authority, and not as the Scribes," whether Greek or Jewish, — the metaphysical and abstract character of Plato's reasonings with the severely practical character of Christ's, — the feebleness of the motives supplied by the abstractions of the one, and the intensity of those supplied by the other, — the adaptation of the one to the intelligent only, and the adaptation of the other to universal humanity, — the very *manner* of Plato, his gorgeous style, at least in those elevated portions of his works in which he reaches the moral sublime, with the still more impressive simplicity of the Great Teacher, — must surely see in the contrast every indication, to say nothing of the utter gratuitousness (historically) of the contrary hypothesis, that the sublime ethics of the Gospel, whether we regard substance, or manner, or tone, or style, are no plagiarism from Plato. As for the man who can hold such a notion, he must certainly be very ignorant either of Plato or of Christ. As the best apology for Mr. Foxton's offensive folly, perhaps it may be charitably hoped that he is nearly ignorant of both. From his exclusive dependence on the antiquated production of the undiscriminating and enthusiastic Dacier, one might conjecture that Mr. Foxton's Platonic studies lie principally there; while Tindal's "Christianity as old as the creation" might be the source of his Theology. — Equally absurd is the attempt to identify the metaphysical dreams of Plato with the doctrinal system of the Gospel, though it is quite true, that, long subsequent to Christ, the Platonizing Christians tried to accommodate the speculations of the sage they loved to the doctrines of a still greater master. It may be said, perhaps, that a Christian is no competent judge of the superiority of the ethics of Christ to those of Plato. He may content himself with saying that Plato never extorted from his *friends* stronger eulogies than Christ has often extorted from his *enemies*.

which have so long disguised it. He even talks most spiritually and with an edifying *onction*. He tells us: "'God was,' indeed, 'in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.' And *but little* deduction need be made from the rapturous language of Paul, who tells us that 'in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*.'* I *concede* to Christ" (generous admission!) "the highest inspiration *hitherto* granted to the prophets of God," — Mahomet, it appears, and Zoroaster, and Confucius, having *also* statues in his truly catholic Pantheon. "The position of Christ," he tells us in another place, is "simply that of the foremost man in all the world," though he "soars far above 'all principalities and powers,' — above all philosophies *hitherto* known, — above all creeds *hitherto* propagated in his name"; — the true Christian doctrine, after having been hid from ages and generations, being reserved to be disclosed, we presume, by Mr. Foxton. His spiritualism, as usual with the whole school of our new Christian infidels, is, of course, exquisitely refined, — but, unhappily, very vague. He is full of talk about "a deep insight," — a "faith not in dead histories, but in living realities, — a revelation to our *innermost* nature." "The true seer," he says, "looking deep into causes, carries in his heart the simple wisdom of God. The secret harmonies of nature vibrate on his ear, and her fair proportions reveal themselves to his eye. He has a deep faith in the truth of God."† "The inspired man is one whose outward life derives all its radiance from the light within him. He walks through stony places by the light of his own soul, and stumbles not. No human motive is present to such a mind in its highest exultation, — no love of praise, — no desire of fame, — no affection, no passion, mingles with the divine afflatus, which passes over without ruffling the soul."‡ And a great many fine phrases of the same kind, equally innocent of all meaning.

It is amazing and amusing to see with what ease Mr. Foxton decides points which have filled folios of controversy. "In the teaching of Christ himself, there is not the *slightest allusion* to the modern evangelical notion of an atonement." "The diversities of 'gifts' to which Paul alludes (1 Cor. xii.) are nothing more than those different 'gifts' which, in common parlance, we attribute to the various tempers and talents of men." * "It is, however, after all, absurd to suppose that the miracles of the Scriptures are subjects of actual belief, either to the vulgar or the learned." † What an easy time of it must such a controvertist have!

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* P. 95. † P. 146. ‡ P. 44.

He thinks it possible, too, that Christ, though nothing more than an ordinary man, may really have "thought himself divine," without being liable to the charge of a visionary self-idolatry, or blasphemy, — as hitherto supposed by every body, Trinitarian or Unitarian, except Mr. Foxton. He accounts for it by the "wild sublimity of human emotion, when the rapt spirit first feels the throbbings of the divine afflatus," &c., &c. A singular afflatus which teaches a man to usurp the name and prerogatives of Deity, and a strange "inspiration" which inspires him with so profound an ignorance of his own nature! *This* interpretation, we believe, is peculiarly Mr. Foxton's own.

The way in which he disposes of the miracles is essentially that of an undiscriminating, unphilosophic mind. There have been, he tells us in effect, so many false miracles, superstitious stories of witches, conjurors, ghosts, hobgoblins, of cures by royal touch, and the like, — and *therefore* the Scripture miracles are false! Why, who denies that there have been plenty of false miracles? And there have been as many false religions. Is there, therefore, none true? The proper business in every such case is to examine fairly the evidence, and not to generalize after this absurd fashion. Otherwise we shall never believe any thing; for there is hardly one truth that has not its half-score of audacious counterfeits.

Still our author is amusingly perplexed, like all the rest of the infidel world, *how* to get rid of the miracles, — whether on the principle of fraud, or fiction, or illusion. He thinks there would be "a great accession to the ranks of reason and common sense by disproving the *reality* of the miracles, without damaging the veracity or honesty of the simple, earnest, and enthusiastic writers by whom they are recorded"; and complains of the coarse and undiscriminating criticism of most of the French and English Deists, who explain the miracles "on the supposition of the grossest fraud acting on the grossest credulity." But he soon finds that the materials for such a compromise are utterly intractable. He thinks that the German Rationalists have depended too much on some "single hypothesis, which often proves to be *insufficient* to meet the great variety of conditions and circumstances with which the miracles have been handed down to us." Very true; but what remedy? "We find one German writer endeavoring to explain away the miracles on the mystical (mythical) theory; and another riding into the arena of controversy on the miserable hobby-horse of 'clairvoyance' or 'mesmerism'; each of these, and a host of others of the same class, rejecting whatever light is thrown on the question by all the theories together." Mr. Foxton therefore proposes, with great and gratuitous liberality, to heap all these theories together, and to take them as they are wanted; not withholding any of the wonders of modern science — even, as would seem, the possible knowledge of "chloroform" * — from the propagators of Christianity!

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* P. 67. † P. 104.

But, alas! the phenomena are still intractable. The stubborn "Book," in its very structure, baffles all such efforts to explain it away; it is willing to be rejected, if it so pleases men, but it guards itself from being thus made a fool of. For who can fail to see that neither all nor any considerable part of the multifarious miracles of the New Testament can be explained by any such gratuitous extension of ingenious fancies; and that if they *could* be so explained, it would be still impossible to exculpate the men who *need* such explanations from the charge of perpetrating the grossest frauds! Yet our logical ostrich, who can digest all these stones, presumptuously declares a miracle an *impossibility*, and the very notion of it a *contradiction*.*

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* Pp. 86, 87.

There are no doubt some minds amongst us, whose power we admit, and whose perversion of power we lament, who have bewildered themselves by *really* deep meditation on inexplicable mysteries; who demand certainty where certainty is not given to man, or demand for truths which are established by sufficient evidence, *other* evidence than those truths will admit. We can even painfully sympathize in that ordeal of doubt to which such minds are peculiarly exposed,—with their Titanic struggles against the still mightier power of Him who has said to the turbulent intellect of man, as well as to the stormy ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy *proud* waves be staid." We cannot wish better to any such agitated mind than that it may listen to those potent and majestic words, "Peace, be still!" uttered by the voice of Him who so suddenly hushed the billows of the Galilean lake.

But we are at the same time fully convinced that in our day there are thousands of youths who are falling into the same errors and perils from sheer vanity and affectation; who admire most what they least understand, and adopt all the obscurities and paradoxes they stumble upon, as a cheap path to a reputation for profundity; who awkwardly imitate the manner and retail the phrases of the writers they study; and, as usual in such cases, exaggerate to caricature their least agreeable eccentricities. We should think that some of these more powerful minds must be by this time ashamed of that ragged regiment of most shallow thinkers, and obscure writers and talkers, who at present infest our literature, and whose parrot-like repetition of their own stereotyped phraseology, mingled with some barbarous infusion of half-Anglicized German, threatens to form as odious a *cant* as ever polluted the stream of thought, or disfigured the purity of language. Happily, it is not likely to be more than a passing fashion; but still it is a very unpleasant fashion while it lasts. As in Johnson's day every young writer imitated as well as he could the ponderous diction and everlasting antitheses of the great dictator; as in Byron's day there were thousands to whom the world "was a blank" at twenty or thereabouts, and of whose "dark imaginings," as Macaulay says, the waste was prodigious; so now there are hundreds of dilettanti pantheists, mystics, and sceptics, to whom every thing is a "sham," an "unreality"; who tell us that the world stands in need of a great "prophet," a "seer," a "true priest," a "large soul," a "god-like soul," * — who shall dive into "the depths of the human consciousness," and whose "utterances" shall rouse the human mind from the "cheats and frauds" which have hitherto everywhere practised on its simplicity. They tell us, in relation to philosophy, religion, and especially in relation to Christianity, that all that has been believed by mankind has been believed only on "empirical" grounds; and that the old answers to difficulties will do no longer. They shake their sage heads at such men as Clarke, Paley, Butler, and declare that such arguments as theirs will not satisfy *them*. We are glad to admit that all this vague pretension is now but rarely displayed in conjunction with the scurrilous spirit of that elder unbelief against which the long series of British apologists for Christianity arose between 1700 and 1750; but there is often in it an arrogance as real, though not in so offensive a form. Sometimes the spirit of unbelief even assumes an air of sentimental regret at its own inconvenient profundity. Many a worthy youth tells us he almost wishes he *could* believe. He admires, of all things, the "moral grandeur," the "ethical beauty," of many parts of Christianity; he condescends to patronize Jesus Christ, though he believes that the great mass of words and actions, by which alone we know any thing about him, are sheer fictions or legends; he believes — gratuitously enough in *this* instance, for he has no ground for it — that Jesus Christ was a very "great man," worthy of comparison at least with Mahomet, Luther, Napoleon, and "other heroes"; he even admits the happiness of a simple, childlike faith in the puerilities of Christianity, — it produces such content of mind! But, alas! *he* cannot believe, — his intellect is not satisfied, — he has revolved the matter too profoundly to be thus taken in; he must, he supposes, (and our beardless philosopher sighs as he says it,) bear the penalty of a too restless intellect, and a too speculative genius; he knows all the usual arguments which satisfied Pascal, Butler, Bacon, Leibnitz; but they will do no longer; more radical, more tremendous difficulties have suggested themselves, "from the depths of philosophy," and far different answers are required now! *

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* Mr. Foxton denies that men, in Paley's "single case, in which he tries the general theorem," *would* believe the miracle; but he finds ti convenient to leave out the most significant circumstances on which Paley makes the validity of the testimony to depend, instead of stating them fairly in Paley's own words. Yet that the sceptics (if such there could be) must be the merest fraction of the species, Mr. Foxton himself immediately proceeds to prove, by showing (what is undeniably the case) that almost all mankind readily receive miraculous occurrences on far lower evidence than Paley's common sense would require them to demand. Surely he must be related to the Irishman who placed his ladder against the bough he was cutting off.

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* See Mr. Foxton's last chapter, *passim*. From some expressions, one would almost imagine that our author himself aspired to be, if not the Messiah, at least the Elias, of this new dispensation. We fear, however, that this "vox clamantis" would reverse the Baptist's proclamation, and would cry, "The *straight* shall be made *crooked*, and the *plain* places *rough*."

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* It may be feared that many young minds in our day are exposed to the danger of falling into one or other of the prevailing forms of unbelief, and especially into that of pantheistic mysticism, from rashly

This is easily said, and we know *is* often said, and loudly. But the justice with which it is said is another matter; for

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meditating in the cloudy regions of German philosophy, on difficulties which would seem beyond the limits of human reason, but which that philosophy too often promises to solve, — with what success we may see from the rapid succession and impenetrable obscurities of its various systems. Alas! when will men learn that one of the highest achievements of philosophy is to know when it is vain to philosophize! When the obscure principles of these most uncouth philosophies, expressed, we verily believe, in the darkest language ever used by civilized man, are applied to the solution of the problems of theology and ethics, no wonder that the natural consequence, as well as just retribution, of such temerity is a plunge into tenfold night. Systems of German philosophy may perhaps be advantageously studied by those who are mature enough to study them; but that they have an incomparable power of *intoxicating* the intellect of the young aspirant to their mysteries is, we think, undeniable. They are producing this effect just now in a multitude of our juveniles, who are beclouding themselves in the vain attempt to comprehend ill-translated fragments of ill-understood philosophies, (executed in a sort of Anglicized-German, or Germanized-English, we know not which to call it, but certainly neither German nor English,) from the perusal of which they carry away nothing but some very obscure terms, on which they themselves have superinduced a very vague meaning. These terms you in vain implore them to define; or, if they define them, they define them in terms which as much need definition. Heartily do we wish that Socrates would reappear amongst us, to exercise his accoucheur's art on these hapless Theætetuses and Menos of our day!

Many such youths might, no doubt, reply at first to the sarcastic querist, (who might gently complain of a slight cloudiness in their speculations,) that the truths they uttered were too profound for ordinary reasoners. We may easily imagine how Socrates would have dealt with such assumptions. His reply would be rather more severe than that of Mackintosh to Coleridge, in a somewhat similar case; namely, that if a notion cannot be made clear to persons who have spent the better part of their days in revolving the difficulties of metaphysics and philosophy, and who are conscious that they are not destitute of patience for the effort requisite to understand them, it may suggest a doubt whether the fault be not in the medium of communication rather than elsewhere; and, indeed, whether the philosopher be not aiming to communicate thoughts on subjects on which man can have no thoughts to communicate. Socrates would add, perhaps, that language was given us to ex-when we can get these cloudy objectors to put down, not their vague assertions of profound difficulties, uttered in the

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press, not to conceal, our thoughts; and that, if they cannot be communicated, invaluable as they doubtless are, we had better keep them to ourselves; one thing it is clear he would do, — he would insist on precise definitions. But, in truth, it may be more than surmised that the obscurities of which all complain, except those (and in our day they are not a few) to whom obscurity is a recommendation, results from suffering the intellect to speculate in realms forbidden to its access; of venturing into caverns of tremendous depth and darkness, with nothing better than our own rushlight. Surely we have reason to suspect as much when some learned professor, after muttering his logical incantations, and conjuring with his logical formulæ, surprises you by saying, that he has disposed of the great mysteries of existence and the universe, and solved to your entire satisfaction, in his own curt way, the problems of the ABSOLUTE and the INFINITE! If the cardinal truths of philosophy and religion hitherto received are doomed to be imperilled by such speculations, one feels strongly inclined to pray with the old Homeric hero, — "that, if they must perish, it may be at least in daylight."

We earnestly counsel the youthful reader to defer the study of German philosophy, — at least till he has matured and disciplined his mind, and familiarized himself with the best models of what used to be our boast, — English clearness of thought and expression. He will then learn to ask rigidly for definitions, and not rest satisfied with half-meanings, or no meaning. To the naturally venturous pertinacity of young metaphysicians, few would be disposed to be more indulgent than ourselves. From the time of Plato downwards, — who tells us that no sooner do they "taste" of dialectics than they are ready to dispute with every body, "sparing neither father nor mother, scarcely even the lower animals," if they had but a voice to reply, — they have always expected more from metaphysics than (except as a *discipline*) they will ever yield. He elsewhere, still more humorously, describes the same trait. He compares them to young dogs, who are perpetually snapping at every thing about them: — *Οἶμαι γάρ σε οὐ λεληθέναι, ὅτι οἱ μειρακίσκοι, ὅταν τὸ πρῶτον λόγων γεύωνται, ὡς παιδιᾷ αὐτοῖς καταχρῶνται, ἀεὶ εἰς ἀντιλογίαν χρώμενοι καὶ μιμούμενοι τοὺς ἐξελέγχοντας αὐτοὶ ἄλλους ἐλέγχουσι, χαίροντες ὥσπερ σκυλάκια τῷ ἕλκειν τε καὶ σπαράττειν τοὺς πλησίον ἀεί.* But we hope we shall not see our metaphysical "puppies" amusing themselves, — as many "old dogs" amongst our neighbors (who ought to have known better) have done, — by tearing into tatters the sacred leaves of that volume, which contains what is better than all their philosophy.

obscure language they love, but a precise statement of their objections, we find them either the very same with those which were quite as powerfully urged in the course of the deistical controversies of the last century (the case with far the greater part), or else such as are of similar character, and susceptible of similar answers. We say not that the answers were always satisfactory, nor are now inquiring whether any of them were so; we merely maintain that the objections in question are not the novelties they affect to be. It is necessary to remember this, in order to obviate an advantage which the very vagueness of much modern opposition to Christianity would obtain, from the notion that some prodigious arguments have been discovered, which the intellect of a Pascal or a Butler was not comprehensive enough to anticipate, and which no Clarke or Paley would have been logician enough to refute. We affirm, without hesitation, that when the new advocates of infidelity descend from their airy elevation, and state their objections in intelligible terms, they are found, for the most, what we have represented them. Indeed, when we read many of the speculations of German infidelity, we seem to be reperusing many of our own authors of the last century. It is as if our neighbors had imported our manufactures; and, after repacking them, in novel forms and with some additions of their own, had reshipped and sent them back to us as new commodities. Hardly an instance of discrepancy is mentioned in the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments," which will not be found in the pages of our own deists a century ago; and as already hinted, the vast majority of Dr. Strauss's elaborate strictures will be found in the same sources. In fact, though far from thinking it to our national credit, none but those who will dive a little deeper than most do into a happily forgotten portion of our literature, (which made noise enough in its day, and created very superfluous terrors for the fate of Christianity,) can have any idea of the extent to which the modern forms of unbelief in Germany — so far as founded on any *positive* grounds, whether of reason or of criticism — are indebted to our English deists. Tholuck, however, and others of his countrymen, seem thoroughly aware of it.

The objections to the truth of Christianity are directed either against the evidence itself, or that which it substantiates. Against the latter, as Bishop Butler says, unless the objections be truly such as prove contradictions in it, they are "perfectly frivolous"; since we cannot be competent judges either as to all which it may be worthy of the Supreme Mind to reveal,* or how far a portion of an imperfectly developed system may harmonize with the whole; and perhaps on many points we never can be competent judges, unless we can cease to be finite. The objections to the *evidence itself* are, as the same great author observes, "well worthy of the fullest attention." The *à priori* objection to miracles has been already briefly touched. If that objection be valid, it is vain to argue further; but if not, the remaining objections must be powerful enough to neutralize the entire mass of the evidence, and, in fact, to amount to a proof of contradictions, — not on this or that minute point of historical detail, — but on such as shake the foundations of the whole edifice of evidence. It will not do to say, "Here is a minute discrepancy in the history of Matthew or Luke as compared with that of Mark or John"; for,

First, such discrepancies are often found, in other authors, to be apparent and not real, — founded on our taking for granted that there is no circumstance unmentioned by two writers, which, if known, would have been seen to harmonize their statements. This possible reconciliation is admitted readily enough in the case of many seeming discrepancies of *other* historians; but it is a benefit which men are slow to extend to the sacred narratives. There the objector is always apt to take it for granted that the discrepancy is real; though it may be easy to suppose a case (and a *possible* case is quite sufficient for the purpose) which would neutralize the objection. Of this perverseness (we can call it by no other name) the examples are perpetual in the critical tortures to which Strauss has subjected the sacred historians.* It may be objected, perhaps, that the gratuitous supposition of some unmentioned fact — which, if mentioned, would harmonize the apparently counter-statements of two historians — cannot be admitted, and is, in fact, a surrender of the argument. But to say so, is only to betray an utter ignorance of what the argument is. If an objection be founded on the alleged *absolute* contradiction of two statements, it is quite sufficient to show any (not the real, but only a hypothetical and possible) medium of reconciling them ; and the objection is in all fairness dissolved ; and this would be felt by the honest logician, even if we did not know of any such instances in point of fact. We do know, however, of many. Nothing is more common than to find, in the narration of two perfectly honest historians, — referring to the same events from different points of view, or for a different purpose, — the omission of a fact which gives a seeming contrariety to their statements; a contrariety which the mention of the omitted fact by a third writer instantly clears up.* Very forgetful of this have the advocates of infidelity usually been : nay, (as if they would make up in the number of objections what they want in weight,) they have frequently availed themselves, not only of apparent *contrarieties*, but of mere *incompleteness* in the statements of two different writers, on which to found a charge of contradiction. Thus, if one writer says that a certain person was present at a given time or place, when another says that he and two more were there ; or that one man was cured of blindness, when another says that two were cured, — such a thing is often alleged as a contradiction ; whereas, in truth, it presents not even a difficulty, — unless one historian be bound to say, not only all that another says, but just so much, and no more. Let such objections be what they will, unless they prove absolute contradictions in the narrative, they are as mere dust in the balance, compared with the stupendous mass and variety of that evidence which confirms the substantial truth of Christianity. And even if they establish *real* contradictions, they still amount, for reasons we are about to state, to no more than dust in the balance, unless they establish contradictions, not in immaterial, but in vital points. The objections must be such as, if proved, leave the whole fabric of evidence in ruins. For,

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* For some further remarks on this subject, see Appendix, No. II.

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* The reader may see some striking instances of his disposition gratuitously to take the *worse* sense, in Beard's "Voices of the Church." Tholuck truly observes, too, in his strictures on Strauss, "We know how frequently the loss of a few words in *one* ancient author would be sufficient to cast an inexplicable obscurity over another." The same writer well observes, that there never was an historian who, if treated on the principles of criticism which his countryman has applied to the Evangelists, might not be proved a mere mythographer. . . . . . "It is plain," says he, "that if absolute agreement among historians" — and, still more, absolute *apparent* agreement — "be necessary to assure us that we possess in their writings credible history, we must renounce all pretence to any such possession." The translations from Quinet, Coquerel, and Tholuck are all, in different ways, well worth reading. The last truly says: "Strauss came to the study of the Evangelical history with the foregone conclusion that 'miracles are impossible'; and where an investigator brings with him an absolute conviction of the guilt of the accused to the examination of his case, we know how even the most innocent may be implicated and condemned out of his own mouth." In fact, so strong and various are the proofs of truth and reality in the history of the New Testament, that none would ever have suspected the veracity of the writers, or tried to disprove it, except for the above foregone conclusion, — "that miracles are impossible." We also recommend to the reader an ingenious *brochure* included in the "Voices of the Church, in Reply to Strauss," constructed on the same principle with Whately's admirable "Historic Doubts"; namely, "The Fallacy of the Mythical Theory of Dr. Strauss, illustrated from the History of Martin Luther, and from actual Mohammedan Myths of the Life of Jesus." What a subject for the same play of ingenuity would be Dean Swift! The date and place of his birth disputed, — whether he was an Englishman or an Irishman, — his incomprehensible relations to Stella and Vanessa, utterly incomprehensible on any hypothesis, — his alleged seduction of one, of both, of neither, — his marriage with Stella affirmed, disputed, and still wholly unsettled, — the numberless other incidents in his life full of contradiction and mystery, — and, not least, the eccentricities and inconsistencies of his whole character and conduct! Why, with a thousandth part of Doctor Strauss's assumptions, it would be easy to reduce Swift to as fabulous a personage as his own Lemuel Gulliver. (For further remarks, see Appendix, No. I.)

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* Any *apparent* discrepancy with either themselves or profane historians is usually sufficient to satisfy Dr. Strauss. He is ever ready to conclude that the discrepancy is *real*, and that the profane historians are right. In adducing some striking instances of the minute accuracy of Luke; only revealed by obscure collateral evidence (historic or numismatic) discovered since, Tholuck remarks: " What an outcry would have been made, had not the specious appearance of error been thuso bviated! " " Luke calls *Gallio* proconsul of Achaia: we should not have expected it, since, though Achaia was originally a senatorial province, Tiberius had changed it into an imperial one, and the title of its governor, therefore, was procurator; now a passage in Suetonius informs us that Claudius had *restored* the province to the Senate." The same Evangelist calls Sergius Paulus governor of Cyprus: yet we might have expected to find only a prætor, since Cyprus was an *imperial* province. In this case, again, says Tholuck, the correctness of the historian has been remarkably attested. Coins, and later still a passage in Dion Cassius, have been found, giving proof that Augustusrestored the province to the Senate; and, as if to vindicate the Evangelist, the Roman historian adds: " Thus proconsuls began to be sent into that island also." — *Trans. from Tholuck*, pp. 21, 22. In the same manner coins have been found, proving he is

Secondly, we are fully disposed to concede to the objector that there are, in the books of Scripture, not only *apparent* but *real* discrepancies, — a point which many of the advocates of Christianity are, indeed, reluctant to admit, but which, we think, no candid advocate will feel to be the less true. Nevertheless, even such an advocate of the Scriptures may justly contend that the very reasons which necessitate this admission of discrepancies also reduce them to such a limit that they do not affect, in the slightest degree, the substantial credibility of the sacred records ; and, in our judgment, Christians have unwisely damaged their cause, and

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correct in some other once disputed instances. Is it not fair to suppose that many apparent discrepancies of the same order may be eventually removed by similar evidence ?

given a needless advantage to the infidel, by denying that any discrepancies exist, or by endeavoring to prove that they do not. The discrepancies to which we refer are just those which, in the course of the transmission of ancient books, divine or human, through many ages, — their constant transcription by different hands, — their translation into various languages, — may not only be expected to occur, but which *must* occur, unless there be a perpetual series of most minute and ludicrous miracles, — certainly never promised, and as certainly never performed, — to counteract all the effects of negligence and inadvertence, to guide the pen of every transcriber to infallible accuracy, and to prevent his ever deviating into any casual error! Such miraculous intervention, we need not say, has never been pleaded for by any apologist of Christianity; has certainly never been promised; and if it had, — since we see, *as a matter of fact*, that the promise has never been fulfilled, — the whole of Christianity would fall to the ground. But then, from a large induction, we know that the limits within which discrepancies and errors from *such* causes will occur, must be very moderate; we know, from numberless examples of *other* writings, what the maximum is, — and that it leaves their substantial authenticity untouched and unimpeached. No one supposes the writings of Plato and Cicero, of Thucydides and Tacitus, of Bacon or Shakspeare, fundamentally vitiated by the like discrepancies, errors, and absurdities, which time and inadvertence have occasioned.

The corruptions in the Scriptures, from these causes, are likely to be even less than in the case of any other writings; from their very structure, — the varied and reiterated forms in which all the great truths are expressed; from the greater veneration they inspired; the greater care with which they would be transcribed; the greater number of copies which would be diffused through the world, — and which, though that very circumstance would multiply the number of variations, would also afford, in their collation, the means of reciprocal correction ; — a correction which we have seen applied, in our day, with admirable success, to so many ancient writers, under a system of canons which have now raised this species of criticism to the rank of an inductive science. This criticism, applied to the Scriptures, has, in many instances, restored the true reading, and dissolved the objections which might have been founded on the uncorrected variations ; and, as time rolls on, may lead, by yet fresh discoveries and more comprehensive recensions, to a further clarifying of the stream of Divine truth, till " the river of the water of life " shall flow nearly in its original limpid purity. Within such limits as these, the most consistent advocate of Christianity not only *must* admit — not only may *safely* admit — the existence of discrepancies, but may do so even with advantage to his cause. He *must* admit them, since such variations must be the result of the manner in which the records have been transmitted, unless we suppose a supernatural intervention, neither promised by God, nor pleaded for by man : he may safely admit them, because — from a general induction from the history of all literature — we see that, where copies of writings have been sufficiently multiplied, and sufficient motives for care have existed in the transcription, the limits of error are very narrow, and leave the substantial identity untouched : and he may admit them with advantage ; for the admission is a reply to many objections founded on the assumption that he must contend that there are *no* variations, when he need only contend that there are none that can be material.

But it may be said, " May not we be permitted, while conceding the miraculous and other evidences of Christianity, and the general authority of the records which contain it, to go a step further, and to reject some things which seem palpably ill-reasoned, distasteful, inconsistent, or immoral ? " " Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." For ourselves, we honestly confess we cannot see the logical consistency of such a position ; any more than the reasonableness, after having admitted the preponderant evidence for the great truth of theism, of excepting some phenomena as apparently at variance with the Divine perfections; and thus virtually adopting a Manichæan hypothesis.* We must recollect that we know nothing of Christianity except from its records; and as these, once fairly ascertained to be authentic and genuine, are all, as regards their contents, supported precisely by the same miraculous and other external evidence which sustains any part of them; as they bear upon them precisely the same internal marks of artlessness, truth, and sincerity, and, historically and in other respects, are inextricably interwoven with one another; we see not on what principles we can safely reject portions as improbable, distasteful, not quadrating with the dictates of "reason," our "intuitional consciousness," and what not. This assumed liberty, however, is, as we apprehend, of the very essence of Rationalism; and it may be called the Manichæism of interpretation. So long as the canonicity of any of the records, or any portion of them, or their true interpretation, is in dispute, we may fairly doubt; but that point once decided by honest criticism, to say we receive such and such portions on account of the weight of the general evidence, and yet reject other portions, *though* sustained by the same evidence, because we think there is something unreasonable or revolting in their substance, is plainly to accept evidence only where it *pleases* us, and to reject it where it *pleases* us not. The only question fairly at issue must ever be, whether the general evidence for Christianity will overbear the difficulties which we cannot separate from the truths. If it will not, we must reject it wholly; and if it will, we must receive it wholly. There is plainly no tenable position between absolute infidelity and absolute belief. And this is proved by the infinitely various and Protean character of Rationalism, and the perfectly undeterminate, but always arbitrary, limits it imposes on itself. It exists in all forms and degrees, from a moderation which accepts nearly the entire system of Christianity, and which certainly rejects nothing that can be said to constitute its distinctive truth, to an audacity of unbelief, which, professing still vaguely to reverence Christianity as "something divine," sponges out nine tenths of the whole; or, after reducing the mass of it to a *caput mortuum* of lies, fiction, and superstitions, retains only a few drops of fact and doctrine, — so few as certainly not to pay for the expenses of the critical distillation.*

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* For further remarks on this very interesting subject, suggested by a conversation with one of the most powerful as well as brilliant minds of this or of any age, see Appendix, No. III.

Nor will the theory of what some call the "intuitional consciousness" avail us here. It is true, as they assert, that the constitution of human nature is such, that, before its actual development, it has a capacity of developing to certain effects only, —just as the flower in the germ, as it expands to the sun, will have certain colors and a certain fragrance, and *no other* ; — all which, indeed, though not very new or profound, is very important. But it is not so clear that it will give us any help on the present occasion. We have an original susceptibility of music, of beauty, of religion, it is said. Granted ; but as the actual development of this susceptibility exhibits all the diversities between Handel's notions of harmony and those of an American Indian, — between Raphael's notions of beauty and those of a Hottentot, — between St. Paul's notions of a God and those of a New Zealander, — it would appear that *the education* of this susceptibility is at least as important as the susceptibility itself, if not more so; for without the susceptibility itself, we should simply have *no* notion of music, beauty, or religion ; and between such negation and that notion of all these which New Zealanders and Hottentots possess, not a few of our species would probably prefer the former. It is in vain, then, to tell us to look into the " depths of our own nature," (as some vaguely say,) and to judge thence what in a professed revelation from heaven is suitable to us, or worthy of our acceptance and rejection respectively. This criterion is, as we see by the utterly different judgments formed by different classes of Rationalists, as to the *how much* they shall receive of the revelation they may generally admit, a very shifting one, — a measure which has no linear unit ; it is to employ, as mathematicians say, a variable as if it were a constant quantity ; or rather, it is to attempt to find the value of an unknown quantity by another equally unknown.

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* It may be as well to remark, that we have frequently observed a disposition to represent the very general abandonment of the theory of "verbal inspiration" as a concession to Rationalism; as if it necessarily followed from admitting that inspiration is not verbal, that therefore an indeterminate portion of the substance or doctrine is purely human. It is plain, however, that this is no necessary consequence: an advocate of plenary inspiration may contend, that, though he does not believe that the very words of Scripture were dictated, yet that the thoughts were either so suggested (if the matter was such as could be known only by revelation), or so controlled (if the matter were such as was previously known), that (excluding errors introduced into the text since) the Scriptures as first composed were — what no book of man ever was, or can be, even in the plainest narrative of the simplest events — a perfectly accurate expression of truth. We enter not here, however, into the question, whether such a view of inspiration is better or worse than another. The simple object has been to correct a fallacy which, judging from what we have recently read, has operated rather extensively. Inspiration may be verbal, or the contrary; but, whether one or the other, he who takes the affirmative or negative of that question may still *consistently* contend that it may be plenary. The question of the inspiration of the whole, or the inspiration of a part, is widely different from that as to the suggestion of the words, or the suggestion of the thoughts. But these questions we leave to professed theologians. We merely enter our protest against a prevailing fallacy.

It may be contended, then, that the principle of Rationalism is logically untenable ; and that for many reasons : not merely or principally on account of the absurdity it involves, — that God has expressly supplemented human reason by a revelation containing an indeterminate but large portion of falsities, errors, and absurdities, and which we are to commit to our little alembic, and distil as we may ; not only on account of the paradox it imposes, that God has demanded our *faith*, for statements which are to be received only as they appear perfectly comprehensible by our *reason;* or, in other words, only for what it is impossible that we should doubt or deny; not merely because the principle inevitably leaves man to construct the so-called revelation entirely for himself; so that what one man receives as a genuine communication from heaven, another, from having a different development of "his intuitional consciousness," rejects as an absurdity too gross for human belief; — not wholly, we say, nor even principally, for these reasons; but for the still stronger reason that such a principle involves in its application an egregious trifling with that great complex mass of evidence, which, as we have said, applies to the *whole* of Christianity, or to *none* of it. As if to baffle the efforts of man consistently to disengage these elements of our belief, the whole are inextricably blended together. The supernatural element, especially, is so diffused, through all the records, that it is more and more felt, at every step, to be impossible to obliterate it, without obliterating the entire system in which it circulates. The stain, if stain it be, is far too deep for any scouring fluids of Rationalism to wash it out, without destroying the whole texture of our creed; and, in our judgment, the only consistent Rationalism is the Rationalism which rejects it all.

At whatever point the Rationalist may take his stand, we do not think it difficult to prove that his conduct is eminently irrational. If, for example, he be one of those moderate Rationalists who admit (as thousands do) the miraculous and other evidence of the supernatural origin of the Gospel, and *therefore* also admit such and such doctrines to be true, — what can he reply, if further asked what reason he can have for accepting these truths, and rejecting others which are supported by the very same evidence? How can he be sure that the truths he receives are established by evidence which, to all appearance, equally authenticates the falsehoods he rejects? Surely, as already said, this is to reject and accept evidence as he pleases. If, on the other hand, he says that he receives the miracles only to authenticate what he knows very well without them, and believes true on the information of reason alone, why trouble miracles and revelation at all? Is not this, according to the old proverb, to "take a hatchet to break an egg"? *

Nor can we disguise from ourselves, indeed, that consistency in the application of the essential principle of Rationalism would compel us to go a few steps further. As Bishop Butler has shown, no greater difficulties (if so great) attach to the page of Revelation than to the volume of Nature itself. What, for example, can be greater than those which are involved in that dread enigma, "the origin of evil," compared with which all other enigmas are trifles, — that abyss into which so many of the difficulties of all theology, natural and revealed, at least disembogue themselves? We feel, therefore, that the admission of the principle of Rationalism would ultimately drive us, not only to reject Christianity, but to reject Theism in all its forms, whether Monotheism, or Pantheism, and even positive or dogmatic Atheism itself. Nor could we stop, indeed, till we had arrived at that absolute pyrrhonism which consists, if such a thing be possible, in the negation of all belief, — even to the belief that we do not believe!

But though the objections to the reception of Christianity are numerous, and some insoluble, the question always returns, whether they overbalance the mass of the evidence in its favor. Nor is it to be forgotten that they are suscepti-

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* If such a man says that he rejects certain doctrines, not on *rationalistic* grounds, but because he denies the canonical authority or the interpretation of portions of the records in which they are found, and is willing to abide by the issue of the evidence on those points, — evidence with which the human mind is quite competent to deal, — we answer, that he is not the man with whom we are now arguing. The points in dispute will be ultimately determined by the honest use of history, criticism, and philology. But between such a man and one who rejects Christianity altogether, we can imagine no *consistent* position.

ble of indefinite alleviation as time rolls on; and with a few observations on this point we will close the present discussion.

A refinement of modern philosophy often leads our rationalist to speak depreciatingly, if not contemptuously, of what he calls a *stereotyped* revelation, — revelation in a "book." It ties down, he is fond of saying, the spirit to the letter; and limits the "progress" and "development" of the human mind in its "free" pursuit of truth. The answer we should be disposed to make is, first, that if a book *does* contain truth, the sooner that truth is stereotyped the better; secondly, that if such book, like the book of Nature, or, as we deem, the book of Revelation, really contains truth, its study, so far from being incompatible with the spirit of free inquiry, will invite and repay continual efforts more completely to understand it. Though the great and fundamental truths contained in either volume will be obvious in proportion to their importance and necessity, there is no limit which can be prescribed to the *degree* of accuracy with which the truth they severally contain may be deciphered, stated, adjusted, — or even to the period in which fragments of new truth shall continue to be elicited. It is true, indeed, that theology cannot be said to admit of unlimited progress, in the same sense as chemistry, — which may, for aught we know, treble or quadruple its present accumulations, vast as they are, both in bulk and importance. But even in theology, as deduced from the Scripture, minute fragments of new truth, or more exact adjustments of old truth, may be perpetually expected. Lastly, we shall reply, that the objection to a revelation's being confined to a "*book*" is singularly inapposite, considering that, by the constitution of the world and of human nature, man, without *books*, — without the power of recording, transmitting, and perpetuating thought, of rendering it permanent and diffusive, — ever is, ever has been, and ever *must* be little better than a savage; and therefore, if there was to be a revelation at all, it might fairly be expected that it would be communicated in this form; thus affording us one more analogy, in addition to the many which Butler has stated, and which may in time be multiplied without end, between "Revealed Religion and the Constitution and Course of Nature."

And this leads us to notice a saying of that comprehensive genius, which we do not recollect having seen quoted in connection with recent controversies, but which is well worthy of being borne in mind, as teaching us to beware of hastily assuming that objections to Revelation, whether suggested by the progress of science, or by the supposed incongruity of its own contents, are unanswerable. We are not, he says, rashly to suppose that we have arrived at the true meaning of the *whole* of that book. "It is not at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscerned. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before." These words are worthy of Butler; and, as many illustrations of their truth have been supplied since his day, so many others may fairly be anticipated in the course of time. Several distinct species of argument for the truth of Christianity, from the very structure and contents of the books containing it, have been invented, — of which Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ" is a memorable example. The diligent collation of the text, too, has removed many difficulties; the diligent study of the original languages, of ancient history, manners, and customs, has cleared up many more; and by supplying proofs of accuracy, where error or falsehood had been charged, has supplied important additions to the evidence which substantiates the truth of Revelation. Against the alleged absurdity of the Laws of Moses, again, such works as that of Michaelis have disclosed much of that *relative wisdom* which aims not at the abstractedly *best*, but the best which a given condition of humanity, a given period of the world's history, and a given purpose could dictate. In pondering such difficulties as still remain in those laws, we may remember the answer of Solon to the question, whether he had given the Athenians the *best* laws; he said, No: but that he had given them the best of which they were capable; — or the judgment of the illustrious Montesquieu, who remarks, "When Divine Wisdom said to the Jews, 'I have given you precepts which are not good,' this signifies that they had only a *relative* goodness; and this is the sponge which wipes out all the difficulties which are to be found in the Laws of Moses." This is a truth which we are persuaded a profound philosophy will understand the better, the more deeply it is revolved; and only those legislative pedants will refuse weight to it, who would venturously propose to give New Zealanders and Hottentots, in the starkness of their savage ignorance, the complex forms of the British constitution.

In a similar manner have many of the old objections of our deistical writers ceased to be heard in our day, unless it be from the lips of the veriest sciolism; the objections, for instance, of that truly pedantic philosophy which once argued that ethical and religious truth is not given in the Scripture in a *system* such as a schoolman might have digested it into; as if the brief iteration and varied illustration of pregnant truth, intermingled with narrative, parable, and example, were not infinitely better adapted to the condition of the human intellect in general! For similar reasons, the old objection, that statements of Christian morality are given without the requisite limitations, and cannot be literally acted upon, has been long since abandoned as an absurdity. It is granted that a hundred folios could not contain the hundredth part of all the limitations of human actions, and all the possible cases of a contentious casuistry; and it is *also* granted that human nature is not so inept as to be incapable of interpreting and limiting for itself such rules as "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Not less strikingly have many of the objections suggested at different periods by the progress of science been dissolved; and, amongst the rest, those alleged from the remote historic antiquity of certain nations; objections on which infidels, like Volney and Voltaire, once so confidently relied. And it is worthy of remark, that some of the old objections of philosophers have disappeared by the aid of that very science, — geology, — which has led, as every new branch of science probably will, to new ones. Geology, indeed, in our judgment, has already done at least as much to remove difficulties as to occasion them; and it is not illogical, or unfair, to surmise that, if we will only have *patience*, its own difficulties, as those of so many other branches of science, will be eventually solved. One thing is clear, that, if the Bible be true, and geology be true, *that* cannot be geologically true which is Scripturally false, or *vice versâ;* and we may therefore laugh at the polite compromise which is sometimes affected by learned professors of theology and geology respectively; who are apt, in extravagant complaisance to one another, to express themselves not simply to the effect that truth may be established by different species of evidence, but as if different species of evidence could establish *contrary* truths. All that is demanded of either — all that is needed — is that they refrain from a too hasty conclusion of absolute contradictions between their respective sciences, and retain a quiet remembrance of the imperfection of our present knowledge both of geology and, as Butler says, of the Bible. The recent interpretation of the commencement of Genesis — by which the first verse is simply supposed to affirm the original creation of all things, while the second immediately refers to the commencement of the human economy — was first suggested by geology, though suspected, and indeed adopted, by some of the early Fathers. On this interpretation, those prodigious cycles which geology demands are, not denied, but simply passed by, with a silence worthy of a *true* revelation, which does not pretend to gratify our curiosity as to the preadamitic condition of our globe, any more than our curiosity as to the history of other worlds. But though, at first sight, this interpretation appeared to many, from old association, inadmissible, it is now felt by multitudes to be the more *reasonable* interpretation, — the second verse certainly more naturally suggesting previous revolutions in the history of the earth, than its then instant creation: and though we frankly concede that we have not *yet* seen any account of the whole first chapter of Genesis which quadrates with the doctrines of geology, it does not become us hastily to conclude that there can be none. If a further adjustment of those doctrines, and a more diligent investigation of the Scripture, together, should hereafter *suggest* any *possible* harmony, — though not the *true* one, but one ever so gratuitously assumed, — it will be sufficient to neutralize the objection. This, it will be observed, is in accordance with what has been already shown, — that, wherever an objection is founded on an apparent contradiction between two statements, it is sufficient to show any *possible* way in which the statements may be reconciled, whether the true one or not. The objection, in that case, to the supposition that the facts are gratuitously assumed, though often urged, is, in reality, nothing to the purpose.* If ever it should be shown, for example, that, supposing as many geological eras as the philosopher requires to have passed in the chasm between the first verse, which asserts the original dependence of all things on the fiat of the Creator, and the second, which is supposed to commence the human era, any *imaginable* condition of our system — at the close, so to speak, of a given geological period — would harmonize with a fair interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis, the objection will be neutralized.

We have little doubt, in our own minds, that the ultimately converging, though, it may be, transiently discrepant conclusions of the sciences of philology, ethnology, and geology (in all of which, we may rest assured, great discoveries are yet to be made) will tend to harmonize with the ultimate results of a more thorough study of the records of the race as contained in the book of Revelation. Let us be permitted to imagine one example of such possible harmony. We think that the philologist may engage to make out, on the *strictest principles of induction*, from the tenacity with which all communities cling to their language, and the slow *observed* rate of change by which they alter, — by which Anglo-Saxon, for example, has been transformed into English,* Latin into Italian, and ancient Greek into modern (though these languages have been affected by every conceivable cause of variation and depravation), — that it would require hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, of years to account for the production, by known natural causes, of the vast multitude of totally distinct languages, and tens of thousands of dialects, which man now utters. On the other hand, the geologist is more and more persuaded of the comparatively recent origin of the human race. What, then, is to harmonize these conflicting statements? Will it not be curious, if it should turn out that nothing *can* possibly harmonize them but the statement of

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* Some admirable remarks in relation to the answers we are bound to give to objections to revealed religion, have been made by Leibnitz (in reply to Bayle) in the little tract prefixed to his Theodicée, entitled "De la Conformité de la Foi avec la Raison." He there shows that the utmost that can fairly be asked is to prove that the affirmed truths involve no necessary contradiction.

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* It contains, let us recollect, (after all causes of change, including a conquest, have been at work upon it,) a vast majority of the Saxon words spoken in the time of Alfred, — nearly a thousand years ago! — The resemblance between the language of Homer and the Romaic — between the oldest fragments of Latin and modern Italian — is still obvious on the most superficial inspection; yet the interval during which these languages have been changing within these moderate limits embraces a very large portion of authentic history. What interval, then, would be required for the origination and formation of whole classes of languages between which the philologist is unable to detect any affinities, — though he is persuaded they all came from a common stock? Nor are we to forget, that, the further we recede, the longer will be the interval required for any given amount of change; for the fewer the languages, the fewer the elements and chances of new combinations.

Genesis, that, in order to prevent the natural tendency of the race to accumulate on one spot, and facilitate their dispersion and destined occupancy of the globe, a preternatural intervention expedited the operation of the causes which would gradually have given birth to distinct languages? Of the probability of this intervention, some profound philologists have, on scientific grounds alone, expressed their conviction. But in all such matters, what we plead for is only—*patience;* we wish not to dogmatize; all we ask is a philosophic abstinence from dogmatism. In relation to many difficulties, what is now a reasonable exercise of faith may one day be rewarded by a knowledge which on those particular points may terminate it. In such ways, it is surely conceivable that a great part of the objections against Revelation may, in time, disappear; and, though other objections may be the result of the progress of the older sciences or the origination of new,—still the solution of previous objections, together with the additions to the evidences of Christianity, external and internal, which the study of history and of the Scriptures may supply, and the brighter and brighter light cast by the progress of Christianity and the fulfilment of its prophecies, may inspire increasing confidence that the new objections are also destined to yield to similar solvents. Meanwhile, such new difficulties, together with those more awful and gigantic shadows, which we have no reason to believe will ever be chased from the sacred page,—mysteries which could not be explained from the necessary limitation of our faculties, and are, at all events, submitted to us as a salutary discipline of our humility,—will continue to form that exercise of faith which is perhaps nearly equal in every age,—and necessary in all ages, if we would be made "little children," qualified "to enter the kingdom of God."

In conclusion; while many are proclaiming that Christianity is effete, and that, in the language of M. Proudhon (who complacently says it amidst the ignominious failure of a thousand social panaceas of his own age and country), it will certainly "die out in about three hundred years"; while many more proclaim that, as a religion of supernatural origin and supernatural evidence it is already dying, if not dead; it were surely not unreasonable to remind them that, even if Christianity *be* false, as they allege, they are utterly forgetting the maxims of a cautious induction, in saying that it will therefore cease to exert dominion over mankind. What proof is there of this? Whether true or false, it has already survived numberless revolutions of human opinions, and all sorts of changes and assaults. It is not confined, like other religions, to any one race, to any one clime, or any one form of political constitution. While it transmigrates freely from race to race, and clime to clime, its chief home, too, is still in the bosom of enterprise, wealth, science, and civilization; and it is at this moment most powerful amongst the nations that have most of these. If not true, it has such an *appearance* of truth as to have satisfied many of the acutest and most powerful intellects of the species, — a Bacon, a Pascal, a Leibnitz, a Locke, a Newton, a Butler; — such an appearance of truth as to have enlisted in its support an immense array of genius and learning: genius and learning, not only in some sense professional, and often wrongfully represented as therefore interested, but much of both strictly extra-professional; animated to its defence by nothing but a conviction of the force of the arguments by which its truth is sustained, and that "hope full of immortality" which its promises have inspired. Under such circumstances it must appear equally rash and gratuitous to suppose, even if it be a delusion, that an institute, which has thus enlisted the sympathies of so many of the greatest minds of all races and of all ages, — which is alone stable and progressive amidst instability and fluctuation, — will *soon* come to an end. Still more absurdly premature is it to raise a pæan over its fall, upon every new attack upon it, when it has already survived so many. This, in fact, is a tone which, though every age renews it, should long since have been rebuked by the constant falsification of similar prophecies, from the time of Julian to the time of Bolingbroke, and from the time of Bolingbroke to the time of Strauss. As Addison, if we mistake not, humorously tells the Atheist, that he is hasty in his logic when he infers that, if there be no God, immortality must be a delusion; since, if chance has actually found him a place in this bad world, it *may*, perchance, hereafter find him another place in a worse; — so we say, that if Christianity be a delusion, since it is a delusion which has been proof against so much of bitter opposition, and has imposed upon such hosts of mighty intellects, there is nothing to show that it will not do so still, in spite of the efforts either of a Proudhon or a Strauss. Such a tone was, perhaps, never so triumphant as during the heat of the deistical controversy in our own country, and to which Butler alludes with so much characteristic, but deeply satirical simplicity, in the preface to his great work. "It is come," says he, "I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. . . . . . On the contrary, thus much at least will here be found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured as he is of his own being, *that it is not, however, so clear that there is nothing in it.*" The Christian, we conceive, may now say the same to the new race of infidels in our own day. Christianity, we doubt not, will still live, when they and their works, and the refutations of their works, are alike forgotten; and a fresh series of attacks and defences shall have occupied for a while (as so many others have done) the attention of the world. Christianity, like Rome, has had both the Gaul and Hannibal at her gates: but as the "Eternal City," in the latter case, calmly offered for sale, and sold, at an undepreciated price, the very ground on which the Carthaginian had fixed his camp, with equal calmness may Christianity imitate her example of magnanimity. She may feel assured that, as in so many past instances of premature triumph on the part of her enemies, the ground they occupy will one day be her own; that the very discoveries, apparently hostile, of science and philosophy, will be ultimately found elements of her strength. Thus has it been, to a great extent, with the discoveries in chronology and history; and thus it will be, we are confident, (and to a certain extent has been already,) with those in geology. That science has done much, not only to render the old theories of Atheism untenable, and to familiarize the minds of men to the idea of miracles, by that of successive creations, but to confirm the Scriptural statement of the comparatively recent origin of our race. Only the men of science and the men of theology must alike guard against the besetting fallacy of their kind, — that of too hastily taking for granted that they already know the whole of their respective sciences, and of forgetting the declaration of the Apostle, equally true of all man's attainments, whether in one department of science or another, — "We know but in part, and we prophesy but in part."

Though Socrates perhaps expressed himself too absolutely when he said that "he only knew that he knew nothing," yet a tinge of the same spirit — a deep conviction of the profound ignorance of the human mind, even at its best — has ever been a characteristic of the most comprehensive genius. It is a topic on which it has been fond of mournfully dilating. It is thus with Socrates, with Plato, with Bacon (even amidst all his magnificent aspirations and bold predictions), with Newton, with Pascal, and especially with Butler, in whom, if in any, the sentiment is carried to excess It need not be said that it is seldom found in the writings of those modern speculators, who rush, in the hardihood of their adventurous logic, on a solution of the problems of the Absolute and the Infinite, and resolve in delightfully brief demonstrations the mightiest problems of the universe; those great enigmas, from which true philosophy shrinks, not because it has never ventured to think of them, but because it has thought of them enough to know that it is in vain to attempt their solution.

To know the limits of human philosophy is "the better part" of all philosophy; and though the conviction of our ignorance is humiliating, it is, like every true conviction, salutary. Amidst this night of the soul, bright stars — far distant fountains of illumination — are wont to steal out, which shine not while the imagined Sun of reason is above the horizon! and it is in that night, as in the darkness of outward nature, that we gain our only true ideas of the illimitable dimensions of the universe, and of our true position in it.

Meanwhile we conclude that God has created "two great lights," — the greater light to rule man's busy day, — and that is Reason; and the lesser to rule his contemplative night, — and that is Faith.

But Faith herself shines only so long as she reflects some faint illumination from the brighter orb.

APPENDIX.

No. I. pp. 389, 402.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DR. STRAUSS'S LIFE OF JESUS.

The inadmissibility of the *principle* of Dr. Strauss's theory of the "mythical" origin of Christianity could alone be discussed within the contracted limits of the preceding essay. It is there contended, and, it is conceived, with reason, that his theory does not account even for the origin, much less for the success, of *such* a "myth" as Christianity. It does not account for the *origin;* since the more the historic conditions of the problem are investigated, the more improbable will it appear that such a "myth" — whether we look at its intellectual or moral characteristics — could have been the product of the Jewish mind of any age, and its known prepossessions; and quite as improbable that, if it could have been such a wild growth of popular fancy and legend, it should have accidentally assumed such varied, and, in the judgment of so many acute minds, such irrefragable, proofs of historic credibility. The theory accounts still less for its *success;* inasmuch as it is incredible that such a "myth," involving, if only a "myth," such extravagant and preposterous demands on credulity, should, in the absence of the wonderful events which form its basis, be actually received as *fact*, not only by a large portion of the Jews, but by still larger portions of many other nations, whose whole sympathies and antipathies, prejudices and prepossessions, were enlisted against it; and who, so far from being interested in the Jewish legends, in which it is supposed to have germinated, recoiled with intense repugnance from them all. In truth, nothing less than a universal lunacy of the nations will account, under such circumstances, for its reception by them.

Mere admiration of the *beauty* of such a "myth" surely cannot account for such a fact. Different races and nations admire, and admire intensely, Homer's Iliad, the Arabian Nights, and Shakspeare's Plays; but these immortal works have never advanced one inch, for all that, towards being received as true history. As little can the mere *assumption* of divine authority on the part of such legends solve the mystery: such assumptions in an enlightened age, and especially among races alien from the nation who have originated such pretensions, are certain to provoke scepticism far more strongly than they invite superstition. The classical mythology, the Egyptian mythology, and the Hindoo mythology, (always restricted to the nations in whose remote barbarism they originated, and with whose immemorial traditions they were intertwined,) may be studied long enough before they make a single proselyte among those different races and different nations who did receive, who have received, and who persist in receiving, the *myths* of Christianity as historic *verities.* So that the very least that can be said is, that the compilers of the Gospel have, with an utterly incomprehensible ingenuity, infinitely transcended all other masters of fable and legend, and have succeeded in making dreams wilder than ever poet feigned wear to minds of different ages and races (for here lies the stress of the argument) the aspect of genuine history.

But though the *principle* alone of Dr. Strauss's theory could be considered in the previous pages, it seemed desirable to describe a little more fully some of the prevailing characteristics of his insidious work. This, after a calm and, so far as possible, impartial study of it, is accordingly attempted in the ensuing pages. To track the author into all his details would, of course, require a work nearly as voluminous as his own. But it is conceived that the following observations, however general, may be in some degree useful in putting the young and unlearned reader upon his guard.

First, then, it may be observed, that the very title of the work is a ludicrous misnomer. Instead of being called "The Life of Jesus," ("critically examined," or otherwise,) it ought rather to be entitled, "A *collection* of all the difficulties and discrepancies which honest criticism has discovered, and perverted ingenuity has imagined, in the four Evangelists." *

Secondly, though composed certainly in a very calm, or rather in a very frigid, style, there perhaps never was a book which more completely realized the idea conveyed in a favorite term of the Germans, "one-sidedness" (*Einseitigkeit*).

Every candid mind must admit that the question of the truth of Christianity is a question of conflicting probabilities. Now, though we might not expect to find in Strauss's work, devoted as it is to a special branch of the vast theme, an examination and refutation of the evidence for the truth of Christianity as derived from external sources, (the incredibility, nay, the *impossibility*, of miracles he quietly takes for granted,*) yet one might justly have expected that in endeavoring to reduce the Gospels to fiction, by exhibiting their supposed *discrepancies*, he would have given some space at least to the consideration of those immensely varied *internal* indications of truthfulness, artlessness, and reality, of those undesigned, because deeply latent, coincidences, with which they obviously abound. These indications of historic verity would, at first sight, seem beyond the reach of deliberate fiction, and much more of accident; while in number they far exceed the aggregate of those discrepancies with which, in justice, they ought to be confronted and compared. Dr. Strauss cannot but be aware that this general exquisite tone of historic reality is not imaginary; inasmuch as, if it be the effect of "art" or "accident," it has imposed on many of the acutest minds, and still imposes on them, in spite of all the efforts of that long array of infidels whose rusty weapons he has burnished and sharpened. Yet from Dr. Strauss's work not the slightest notion could be formed, that there were any such evidences to be examined: one would suppose that the Gospels were little more than a tissue of contradictions and discrepancies, and had little else to recommend them to mankind; — whose credulous deference to them, if this were true, would be a perfectly unaccountable phenomenon, more incredible than any of the miracles our author pronounces impossible. Indeed, prudence itself should have made him more candid; for the more incongruous and contradictory he proves the Gospels, the more arduous he makes the problem imposed on infidelity, — of accounting for their reception and success. If nothing were in them but what he finds there, — *that* difficulty neither he nor any man would have had to encounter.

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* "As for his doctrines," Quinet says, "there is not, I think, one of his boldest propositions which had not previously been advanced, sustained, and debated. How, then, can we account for the celebrity of a work which appears to be the result of a *general spoliation*?"

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* As this is an important point, it may be as well to cite Dr. Strauss's express words: "Indeed, no just notion of the true nature of history is possible, without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of second causes and of the *impossibility of miracles*." — Vol. I., Introduction, sect. 13, p. 64. English translation. All the author had to do was to prove this, and he might have spared his large volumes of minute criticism.

Dr. Strauss may say, perhaps, that it was not his business to exhibit the other side of the argument: we believe him; or, rather, we believe that it was not his *pleasure;* for it *was* his business. The truth is, he was an advocate, not a judge; a special pleader for infidelity, not the dispassionate investigator he would be thought to be; otherwise, he could not have failed to notice some of those opposing considerations which have imposed, if they are ill-founded, on many of the greatest minds of the species; which made a Newton say, that he discerned more indications of genuineness, authenticity, and truthfulness in the Scriptures than in any other books whatsoever.

A mind intent on truth would have endeavored to balance the evidence; it is sufficient for Dr. Strauss to exhibit one side. It is as though he hoped, and not vainly, (for, from the constitution of the human mind, it is assuredly a very probable result,) that, by keeping the thoughts of the reader intent for a sufficient time *exclusively* on alleged objections and discrepancies, he might produce, by their mere accumulation, an effect which would be in some danger of being dissipated either by the statement of the counter-evidence, or by a statement of only the *real* difficulties. To let the mind exist for a time in an atmosphere of doubt, — to breath little but *azote*, — is one of the easiest and most compendious ways of destroying faith.* Accordingly, our author seems much more solicitous about the number than about the quality of the objections; and is often as fond of exaggerating the task of reconciling points, even where he at last allows that reconciliation is possible, as of exhibiting the force of more formidable objections. In a word, there is no work in the perusal of which it is more necessary for the reader to remember the maxim, "*Audi alteram partem.*"

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* This is often the effect even of works the very object of which is the *refutation* of objections, if they are *exclusively* devoted to such refutation. Speaking of some such works, Dr. Graves, in the introduction to his work on the Pentateuch, well observes: "Those who were employed in refuting the objections of any one particular antagonist, were almost inevitably led to magnify these objections beyond their relative importance in any general consideration of the subject. The same writers also were frequently induced to employ their attention almost exclusively on such passages as seemed obscure or objectionable, and pass with less distinct

Thirdly, but whether it was Dr. Strauss's exclusive business or pleasure — whichever the reader pleases — to detect "holes" in the garments of the Evangelists, has he ever made the rents which he pretends only to find? In a word, has he dealt fairly by the *objections*? We fearlessly answer that he has not. The paraded discrepancies are frequently assumed; sometimes even manufactured.

Let us take a single example by way of illustration. The account of the entertainment given to Jesus at Bethany before the last Passover, which has often attracted the attention of the Harmonists, is related by Matthew, Mark, and John. It is nearly the universal opinion of critics, that these Evangelists refer to the same event, and that the entertainment is a totally different one from that described by Luke, vii. 36–50. This last was apparently given at a different time, in a different place, and under different circumstances. One incident, indeed, of a similar nature, is recorded in both;

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notice the clear and direct arguments and proofs which were to be derived from those parts of the Sacred History which scepticism itself could scarcely venture to attack; thus suffering the adversary of revealed truth to lead its advocate from the strongest to the weakest ground, and prevent him from employing those topics which would operate most powerfully on every candid and unprejudiced mind. Works constructed on this plan have sometimes a most pernicious effect on the young, the uninformed, and the wavering; they lead them to consider Revelation as consisting chiefly of obscurities, and founded chiefly on questionable facts; while, on the contrary, the great truths it establishes are as clear and as intelligible as they are important; and the series of proofs on which it rests, when viewed in their natural order, are so firmly connected and plainly conclusive, that, if considered with attention and candor, they carry with them the fullest conviction."

namely, the grateful act of a woman (very differently characterized, however, in the two cases),who shows her love to the Lord by a costly act of personal attention. Every thing else is different.*

Now, in the account of the entertainment at Bethany, as described by Matthew, Mark, and John, there is absolutely *no note of time ;* and unless such time were fixed in the narrative itself, or the narrative itself formed part of a work of professed chronology, we should have no right to fix it ; for nothing is more common in regular history, and still more in biographical *collectanea* (which is probably the most characteristic description of the Gospels), to introduce an incident, not because it occurred at the same time with those amidst which it is inserted, but to throw some light on them, or supply some link in relation to them.†

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* Greswell says : " The unction at Bethany is recorded by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John, between any of whose accounts and Luke (vii. 36 – 50), where also an unction is related, the difference is, as I think, so palpable and so indisputable, that, notwithstanding the trouble which some learned men have taken to prove them the same, I should consider it a waste of time and argument seriously to prove them distinct." — Greswell's *Dissertations upon the Harmony of the Gospels,* Vol. II. p. 127.

† John says (xii. 1) that Christ came to Bethany " six days before the Passover" ; and in ver. 12, that " on the morrow " he made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The account of the entertainment, as also a statement of the resort of many Jews to Bethany to see Jesus, falls between these notes of time ; if then it did not occur on the evening previous to the entry (Jesus returned to Bethany, let us recollect, on several successive evenings), John may have *anticipated* these transactions at Bethany for some special reason ; and in this case the *τῇ ἐπαύριον* will be connected with the note of time in the first verse of the chapter. On the other hand, if it be more natural to connect that note of time with the entertainment, it does not prevent the supposition that, for some special reason (as Greswell and Robinson both think), Matthew and Mark may have *postponed* their account of it. One states that two days before the Passover, Jesus predicts his approaching betrayal, and the other that at that date his enemies were plotting his death. Both afterwards give an account of the incident at Bethany, but, like John, without *any note of time.* Neither John nor they limit the time in the incident itself ; if the context

Yet Strauss, without qualification, says: "Neither is the *time* of the occurrence precisely the same; for, *according to Matthew and Mark*, the scene takes place after the solemn entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, only *two days*, at the utmost, before the Passover; *according to John*, on the other hand, before the entrance, as early as *six* days prior to the Passover." This *positive* statement of the time (as if it were specified in the Evangelists, while in fact it is merely inferred by Strauss from the context), is a specimen of his usual license. He assumes that he may treat the Gospels as if they were chronological tables. Though no date is affixed to the incident in question, he chooses to place it between the two nearest dates he can find; and then gives the date, not as if it were an inference of his own, but as if the Evangelists had inserted it in the account of the incident itself!

Again, Matthew and Mark say, the woman poured the ointment on Christ's head; John, that she anointed his feet. Here is another discrepancy, exclaims Dr. Strauss. How so? the reader rejoins. May not both be true? — Once more; Matthew says, that the "disciples" — Mark, that "some of them who were present" — John, that "Judas" — manifested indignation at the spectacle. Here are more discrepancies, exclaims Dr. Strauss. Why so? it may be retorted again. May not all have been right? And to show that the narrative involves no contradiction, may it not be asked, whether, if the *same* historian had said, that "the woman broke an alabaster box of ointment, and both poured the perfume on the Lord's head, and *also* anointed his feet, — that some who were present murmured, and amongst the rest Judas," would Dr. Strauss, or any one else, have thought there was any thing in it which required criticism? Why, then, should he affirm this, because a portion of the facts appears in one historian, and a portion in another?

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in John be assumed to fix it, we need not assume that theirs does; if theirs be assumed to fix it, we need not assume that John's does. Strauss assumes both, and then speaks as if he had assumed nothing.

Again, Matthew and Mark expressly describe this entertainment in Bethany as taking place at the house of "Simon the Leper." John does not mention the name of the host; but still states that it was in Bethany; that Mary the sister of Lazarus was the person who broke the box of ointment; that Martha served. — Matthew and Mark were most probably mistaken, argues Dr. Strauss; from the above particulars, it *must* have been the house of Lazarus where the entertainment was given! And this, too, although Lazarus himself is introduced by John in terms which much more naturally suggest the idea that he was a guest rather than the host. "He was one of those who sat at table with Jesus" (*τῶν συνανακειμένων αὐτῷ*). The reason, however, of the arbitrary conjecture is immediately obvious. Having by this license of supposition *proved*, in his way, that John meant that the scene took place in the house of Lazarus, though he does not say that it did, and that therefore Matthew and Mark are in error, when they positively say it took place *elsewhere*, he not only concludes that Matthew and Mark hastily wrote on erroneous information; but that such divergences (entirely of his own making, be it remembered) justify the supposition that the wholly different narrative given by Luke is but a distorted account of the same entertainment, and affords a further proof of the facility with which the legends of the Gospel were varied, augmented, and embellished! That is, having tortured the very variations in the *same* narrative (which simply prove that there was no collusion) into a proof that parts of the narrative are successive products of fiction, he proceeds to argue that a narrative of a totally different event is but another variation of the same variations; and then, assuming that it was so, proceeds complacently to draw his conclusion that nearly the whole is divested of historic credibility. Yet he has nothing whatever to found this assumed identification of the two narratives upon, except that it does not seem probable that *two* women should have proffered a not unusual mark of respect (though more costly than usual) to an honored guest; costly in this case, because proportionate to the love and veneration of the parties towards their great Master and Benefactor.

In short, there is nothing which may not be proved or disproved in history by such a style of criticism, — such a license of conjecture and assumption. There are no historic writers in the world whose narratives might not be resolved into *myths* by the consistent application of the same artifices.

There is no injustice in saying that a very large proportion of the difficulties on which Dr. Strauss expatiates are, in the same manner, difficulties which he assumes to be insoluble, because he first assumes the conditions which make them so. Such a critic is to historic truth what the concave lens is to light. Parallel rays become divergent, and convergent rays are rendered parallel. At all events, they have a focus as distant as our author chooses to place it.

Fourthly, our author appears to act on certain comprehensive, though novel, canons of historic criticism, the adoption of which renders his present task, or any other achievement of the like kind which he may propose to himself, a very easy one ; as, first, that if an event be not in *his* judgment probable, that circumstance shall often be sufficient at once to neutralize the positive testimony which affirms it ; secondly, that if he can point to an event or narrative in the Old Testament *analogous* to one in the New, the former may be adduced as a proof of the mythical origin of the latter ; thirdly, that if the " not probable " reaches, in *his* judgment, the impossible (in which category he ranks both miracle and prophecy), it is to be rejected at once ; which of course *ought* to supersede all discussion with regard to the majority of the narratives of the Gospels ; fourthly, if a narrative is summary and general, it may be suspected that the author had no personal knowledge of the facts ; if it is full of little dramatic traits, he may be suspected of embellishment. A word or two on each of these, accompanied by as many illustrations.*

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* The more important of these novel canons are expressly avowed by Strauss, in laying down his " criteria by which to distinguish the unhis-

1. Such and such an event, or such and such a conjunction of events, Dr. Strauss often thinks it sufficient at once to dismiss, as in his judgment *improbable.* Thus he finds that Jesus is represented as making a disclosure of his Messiahship to the woman of Samaria. " What could induce Jesus to send roaming into the futurity of religious history the contemplation of a woman, whom he should rather have induced to *examine herself, and to ponder on the corruptions of her own heart?* " And as Dr. Strauss can find no satisfactory answer unless it were a vainglorious wish to elicit, from her, " at any

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torical in the Gospel narrative." — *Introduction*, sect. 16. We may summarily reject, he tells us, all miracles, prophecies, narratives of angels and of demons, and the like, as simply "impossible" and "irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events"; he deciding (but, unhappily, not *proving*) that "the absolute cause *never* disturbs the chain of secondary causes by single arbitrary acts of interposition." — We are, in a similar manner, to regard with extreme suspicion whatever does not follow the *ordinary* experience of mortals; as, for example, any very extraordinary precocity in an individual; or what is "psychologically improbable," as when a person is described as "feeling, thinking, acting, in a manner directly opposed to his own habitual mode and that of men in general"; a rule which, considering that half history is a record of human inconsistencies, — many of them outrageous enough, — is, even on Strauss's theory, to be cautiously applied." Indeed, if *his* theory of Christianity be true, its reception by mankind is itself the strangest of all these "psychological" inconsistencies; so that he ought by rights to abandon his theory by this very *criterion* for justly applying it: and affirm either that Christianity *must* be true, or that it has *not* been believed. — Lastly, "If the form be poetical, or the actors converse in a more *diffuse* and elevated strain than might be *expected from their training and situations*, such discourses, at all events, are not to be regarded as historical"; but then, conveniently enough, the "absence of these marks of the 'unhistorical' are also quite compatible with the mythical character of the composition, 'since the mythus often wears the most simple and apparently historical form.'" By these means, the banquet of history may be made as airy as that which feasted the eyes and mocked the stomach of the craving Sancho, in his island of Barataria. There is not a dish which the wand of our critical Pedro Rezio de Aguero cannot cause to vanish from the table; and it is well if he allows us the "hundred confected wafers, and a few thin slices of quince."

cost," an acknowledgment of Messianic claims, and as it would be unjust to ascribe this design to Jesus, we must impute the incident to "the glorifying legend" or "the idealizing biographer"! — He finds it stated that the disciples mistook those words of our Lord, "Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep"; it is improbable, he says. — He thinks the same of their misconstruction of his words at the well of Samaria, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "It is in the fourth Evangelist's *manner*," says Dr. Strauss, "which we have learned to recognize by so many examples. They are amongst those carnal interpretations of expressions intended spiritually by Jesus, which are of habitual occurrence in the fourth Gospel, and are therefore suspicious"; that is, whatever is *characteristic* of classes of persons must be suspicious, for such characteristic traits must be frequently recurrent. He finds that the rulers are represented as mocking Christ on the cross, with the words, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him"; — it is *improbable*, says Strauss, "for these words are taken from a psalm, in which they are put into the mouth of the ungodly, and the Sanhedrists could not have adopted them without voluntarily assuming that character; which they would surely have taken care to avoid." Hypocrites and murderers are not so punctilious. As if *they* were likely to prove particularly solicitous about perfect consistency of character! It is a wonder Dr. Strauss did not also prove that it is "improbable" that they would have *acted* like "the ungodly," and thus rendered dubious the fact of the crucifixion.

In these instances of a liberal application of an entirely novel canon of historical criticism, no pains have been taken to select the worst. They are such as occur every few pages; and as we might have selected some examples less flagrant, so we might have given very many still more so. To us it appears that a man might just as well argue that, since the rout at Cressy and Poitiers is *à priori* improbable, the return of Bonaparte from Elba improbable, his expedition to Russia improbable, we are therefore at liberty to reject these, and a thousand other events. Indeed, there is hardly any thing that may not, in this quiet way, be rejected as improbable, unless it be that Dr. Strauss should ever find any thing that is *probable.*

But though full of arbitrary assumptions himself, he will scarcely allow hypothesis or conjecture, even when most fairly adopted by his opponents. It is strange and improbable, he argues, that, supposing *Joseph* was compelled to repair to Bethlehem to the census, *Mary* should have gone with him, since only the males were required to go. "There might be a dozen reasons, of which we know nothing," exclaim the critics. "But they are all imaginary reasons," rejoins Dr. Strauss. "And is not your 'no reason' equally imaginary," may surely be fairly retorted. "*You* are perpetually employing these 'no reasons.' Suffer us to imagine a few *reasons ;* and we may do so with the more justice, inasmuch as any mode of reconciling alleged discrepancies of fact and statement, however hypothetical, is truly valid as a reply to your charge of *contradictions ;* while an arbitrary assumption of 'no reasons' for a fact asserted by an historian, is universally admitted to be one of the most precarious of all modes of reasoning."

2. If our author finds any event in the Old Testament *similar* to any in the New, such analogy (often faint enough) becomes forthwith the suggestive embryo of the evangelical narrative, or one of the elements out of which it was constructed, and determines it to be instantly of mythical origin. This is a convenient rule, since all history, sacred or profane, "while the constitution of human nature remains the same," (to quote the language of the philosophic Thucydides,) will reproduce and exhibit closely analogous events. Does he find, for example, instances of celebrated Hebrews, the children of long childless parents? That is sufficient to account for the mythical tale of the Baptist's parentage! Does he find that Jesus is represented as seated by a "well," when the Samaritan woman met with him?

It is that " idyllic locality with which the old Hebrew legend associates so many critical incidents"![*] Therefore, of course, the incident is mythical. Jesus meets with a woman *there*: so did Eliezer meet with Rebekah, and Jacob with Rachel; and hence the evangelic fable! "Jesus begs of the woman to let him drink; so does Eliezer of Rebekah": nothing less than demonstration, of course, that the Gospel narrative is but an adaptation of the Old Testament facts, or rather a new romance made out of an old one! The star of Bethlehem is similarly suggested by that in the prophecy of Balaam; and the transfiguration, by the visit of Moses to Sinai. The birth of Christ is made known to the shepherds at Bethlehem, while "watching their flocks"; so is Moses "visited by a heavenly apparition" under somewhat similar circumstances, and "God took David from his sheepfolds to be the shepherd of his people." Who can fail to see that such incidents are the obvious germ of the evangelical *myth*? — Into what pleasant romance may we transform history, if we are at liberty to assume what have been ignorantly taken for "historic parallels" to be but variations of a common "legend"! There is an end of all history, if we are to indulge conjecture in this way. A man may as well argue that the emulous valor of the two soldiers, T. Pulfio and L. Varenus, in the fifth book of Cæsar's Gallic War, was no doubt a fiction suggested by the narrative of the similar rivals in the fourth book of the Anabasis of Xenophon; or attribute the proffer of the crown to Cromwell, and its rejection by him, to the similar event related of Cæsar.

3. But when our author comes to the miraculous or the prophetic, then how delightfully easy is his task! His curt axiom of historical criticism — that the supernatural is in-

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[*] He who remembers that the "well" is and ever has been in the East, will little wonder that historic scenes are often connected with it. The frequent mention of this "idyllic locality" in Oriental narrative is hardly more "suspicious," than similar references to the ancient "forum" or the modern "market-place."

credible and impossible — instantly disposes of whole chapters, which would otherwise seem impressed with every internal mark, and supported by every external proof, of their truthfulness. "The supernatural," it is said, "here shows we are not on historic ground; there is so much about angels, demons, miracles; of course this is not to be literally believed, and cannot be true." — Dr. Strauss vehemently exclaims against it as a *petitio principii*, if a critic assigns supernatural power as a solution of any difficulty. But then is it any worse than his own *petitio principii*, — that a narrative is at once to be rejected *because* it involves the preternatural? In fact, it only shows that neither party in this war of critical objections can bring the contest to a decisive termination. The question must be carried higher, and the previous *general* credibility of the evidence for Christianity ascertained and determined on the entire balance of evidence. Let that be established, and it will crush to atoms by its weight the frail fabric raised on a discrepancy here and there. On the other hand, let Dr. Strauss *prove* what he so preposterously takes for granted, "that miracles are impossible"; and he need not strain criticism, not to say honesty, to effect the downfall of a system which is absolutely dependent on its supernatural claims, and frankly avows that dependence.

But though Dr. Strauss generally relies in the case of miracles on his usual comprehensive *à priori* reason for rejecting them, he is sometimes at the superflous pains of trying to prove them *historically improbable;* and then exhibits his usual license of conjecture. Thus he thinks that, since the resurrection of Lazarus is not mentioned by the first three Evangelists, it is most improbable that it should have been known by them; therefore it is all but certain that it was not known; if not known to them, it could only be from its not having occurred; therefore it is certainly to be rejected: an ingenious sorites, by which we may at any time dispense with the positive testimony of an historian, if we do not find what he relates related also by other historians! But in this and other cases, if Dr. Strauss had but proved his postulatum that "a miracle is impossible," he might have dispensed with this circuitous way of proving, from assumptions of historic probabilities, that it is *also* in some degree "improbable."

On the same axioms our author disposes at once, by one comprehensive excision, of all possibility of proofs from prophecy; prophecy cannot be true. Yet, as before, he here employs the assumptions he denies to others. It is unreasonable, in his judgment, to infer that any event mentioned in the New Testament is a proof of the truth of ancient prophecies; because we are there in the region of the "supernatural"; nay, by the ingenious assumptions he is pleased to make, it is impossible, even if there *are* true prophecies, that they can ever be proved to be so; since the moment he sees any apparent similarity between any statement in the Old Testament and any event in the New, that similarity, *ipso facto*, affords him indications of the mythical origin of the New Testament narrative; and the more exact the correspondence, the stronger the indications: so that the conformity of the event no longer proves the truth of the prophecy; but the fact of the prophecy is uniformly considered the *cause* of the "myth." We ought not perhaps to be much surprised, if in a similar way some disciple of Dr. Strauss should prove that the Jews by a sort of dramatized myth have been pleased to "disperse" themselves "among all nations," and have done so at different periods of history, because they found in their ancient writings it became them to be zealous for the honor of their ancient lawgiver and prophets; that, in a similar manner, nations hostile to Christianity have embraced it, not because it was truly predicted that they should, but in order to render that declaration a true prediction; and that even such phenomena as Dr. Strauss — apparently foreshadowed in the most distinct manner — are no more than a sort of practical myths to which those prophecies have given rise! At all events, it is impossible for him to fail; for if any one pleads the conformity of an event with the prediction as a proof of the truth of the latter, our author is immediately armed with his comprehensive *postulatum*, as in the case of miracles: — "We here get into the region of the supernatural; of course nothing is to be believed there." Have we any more business to believe his easy assumptions, that circumstantial, and seemingly well-attested histories, are no more than universally accredited myths, constructed because men were predisposed to realize ancient prophecy? especially in the many cases in which, so far as we know the conditions of their history, they certainly could not have thus realized them, if they would; and, so far as we can judge of human motives, would not have realized them in such a form if they could?

And here it may be worth while to observe some of the strange consequences which must follow from the admission of Dr. Strauss's theory of the mythical origin of Christianity, namely, that it was little more than a super-fœtation on Jewish prejudices, and the natural product of Messianic legends and fables. It appears, first, that the genius of that nation having ever been preëminently exclusive, this product of their *prejudices* is mainly characterized by the renunciation of their *prejudices;* secondly, that though the peculiar product of their *national* prepossessions, it was rejected and is still rejected by the great majority of the *nation;* thirdly, that though their ancient prophecies led them to dote upon the idea of a triumphant and conquering Messiah, — a prepossession in which the early advocates of Christianity seem to have originally had their full share, — this product of their prepossessions is directly opposed to that notion, and exhibits to them the repulsive novelty of a crucified and suffering Messiah; fourthly, that though their prepossessions prompted them, as they ever have done, to monopolize the favor of the Deity, these prepossessions somehow dictated a system which lays the axe at the root of that darling hypothesis; fifthly, that this product of national prepossessions, founded on old Messianic fables and myths, though it was *not* acceptable to the taste of the majority of the nation, yet was extensively received by nations to which not only *no* Messianic myths could have been acceptable, but to which all Messianic myths must have been odious; that, in short, the system did not meet the prejudices of those who, according to the theory, must have been *prejudiced* in its favor; and *did* suit the prejudices of those who, according to that or any other theory, must have been prejudiced against it! A curious hypothesis it would certainly be, — and yet a strictly parallel one, — which should assure us that a certain religious institution (making the most enormous demands on men's credulity, if false) was the natural effect of the previous historic development and ancient prepossessions of the English, which yet was somehow vehemently rejected by the bulk of the English; but was nevertheless received implicitly by the French and other nations, their mortal enemies, to the rejection of all the institutions which had been the growth of *their own* historical development and ancient prepossessions. The fact is, that Christianity, so far from being the natural product of the previous condition of the Jewish nation, was as directly opposed to all which venerable prepossession and ancestral pride taught them most fondly to cherish, as it was to the prejudices, superstitions, and philosophy of the nations around them. St. Paul truly represents the matter when he says (in the words cited in the preceding essay) that "Christ was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness."

4. Another ingenious artifice of our author (though not so systematically adopted as the preceding) is, that, by his arbitrary requirements, the just conditions of historical representation can never be fulfilled. Is a narrative minutely circumstantial, — full of those little traits, those incidental touches and allusions, which are in general regarded as proofs of reality and truthfulness "beyond the reach of art"? They are dramatic embellishments designed to enhance the verisimilitude of the story. Is the narrative bare and meagre? That very generality and vagueness of statement must pass

for proof that the facts are not given by any one intimate with the facts. Some of our author's countrymen have justly commented on this convenient ambiguity in the decisions of the critical oracle. He has been accused, he says, of "using both the particularity and the brevity of narratives, as proofs of their mythical character." And in spite of his defence, most justly. "In all cases," he tells us, "in which there are extant two accounts of a single fact, the one full, the other concise, opinions may be divided as to which of them is the original. *When* these accounts have been liable to the modifications of tradition, it is important to bear in mind that tradition has *two* tendencies; the one to sublimate the concrete into the abstract, the individual into the general; the other, not less essential, to substitute arbitrary fictions for the historical reality which is lost. If then we put the want of precision in the narrative of the first Evangelist to the account of the former *function* of the legend, ought we at once to regard the precision and dramatic effect of the other Gospels as a proof that their authors were eyewitnesses? Must we not rather *examine* whether these qualities be not derived from the second function of the legend?"

We soon see how summary this examination is, and in what, as a matter of course, it results. As thus: — "In detailed narratives, of which we shall presently notice many examples, while Matthew simply tells what Jesus said on a certain occasion, the two other Evangelists are able to describe the glance with which his words were accompanied. (Mark, iii. 5; x. 21; Luke vi. 10.) On the mention of a blind beggar of Jericho, Mark is careful to give us his name, and the name of his father (x. 46). From these *particulars* we might *already augur* what the *examination* of single narratives will prove: namely, that the *copiousness of Mark and Luke is the product of the second function* of the legend, which we may call the *function of embellishment.*" — With two such "functions" of the "legend," the "function" of the historical critic becomes easy enough.

Almost every inconvenient narrative may of course easily be found too long or too short, too meagre or too minute. On such principles, if Truth herself were to *photograph* a scene of history, it would be competent to Dr. Strauss to prove that her rays were flatterers; he might exclaim, with Miss Edgeworth's Irishman, "that the picture was more *like* than the original."

5. At one feature in Dr. Strauss's work men will certainly do well to wonder. It is at the perfection which the critical temperament may attain. It might *à priori* have been thought impossible that any man, whatever his conviction that the wonderful creations of the New Testament were fictions or myths, could have glowed so little in treating of them, — could have felt so little their sublimity or beauty, — could have so effectually suppressed all emotion in applying to them the canons of his minute criticism, or evinced so little remorse in the attempt to destroy the impression of their historic reality. On the score of taste alone, few would have supposed it possible that a man could have treated the scene of the Last Supper, the still more wonderful scenes of Gethsemane, or those of the Cross and Sepulchre, with so little power of appreciating their intense beauty, sublimity, and pathos. An iconoclast, however stolid, could hardly take up his hammer to shiver to atoms the most exquisite forms of sculpture with the feelings of a common stone-mason. It would be difficult to conceive that there is another in all the world to match our author in the *nil admirari* vein, — in the power of preserving a stoical apathy in the presence of (to say the least) the divinest conceptions of uninspired genius; or one who is so utterly a stranger to that enthusiasm which must enter as an integral element into the constitution of a critic, if he is to be equipped for the discharge of any of the more elevated functions of criticism. Some degree of this enthusiasm, indeed, is essential to their right performance; and in its utter absence a truly great critic can no more be formed, even though he possess cart-loads of minute learning,

than any number of skeletons can make a living man. How different is the tone in which, with similar infidelity, a more poetic soul, like that of Byron or Shelley, has often broke out into spontaneous homage to the glorious poetry of the Old and New Testament!

It may be said, perhaps, that Dr. Strauss thought it his duty to suppress all emotion; if so, it must be confessed he has completely succeeded in suppressing all signs of it. It is not every man who could sponge out the pictures of Raphael without a faltering hand; or march through the galleries of the Louvre or the British Museum with the sole purpose of applying his six-inch rule to the feet and hands of each ancient statue, in order to ascertain that they exactly corresponded in length; or find out, by chipping them with his hammer, — by knocking off a nose here, and an ear there, — the precise mineralogical character of the stone or marble from which they were chiselled. He gives us, more perfectly than any other critic, a notion of that class of men who, in the bitter language of one of our own poets, can

"Botanize upon their mother's grave." *

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* When Dr. Strauss does deviate (as he sometimes does) from the equanimity of criticism, it certainly is not in the direction of a genial admiration for moral beauty, or sublimity, or pathos. It is to indulge himself in some approach to a joke or sneer, in which, unhappily, the will to be witty has not been seconded by nature. Thus, when commenting on our Lord's triumphal procession into Jerusalem on the ass on which man had never before ridden, he thinks it decorous to say: "One does not understand how Jesus could designedly increase the difficulty of his progress, by the choice of a hitherto unridden animal: which, unless he kept it in order by Divine omnipotence (for the most consummate human skill would not suffice for this on his first riding), must inevitably have occasioned much disturbance to the triumphal procession. . . . . . To such an inconvenience Jesus would assuredly not have exposed himself without a cogent reason. . . . . . The authors of the intermediate Gospels did not hesitate to receive this trait into their memoirs, because they, indeed, in writing, would not experience the same inconvenience from the undisciplined animal which it must have caused to Jesus in riding." It is not in every man's power to be witty; but it

It may be said that this is a question of taste. It is, but not of taste only; for, as already said, the possession of something like a *soul* is of much importance in relation to all the higher functions of criticism. A more genial temperament would not only have naturally given another tone to many of the criticisms of Strauss, but is absolutely essential to the appreciation of many of the points of which he treats. As it is, he resembles many a commentator on our own Shakspeare, whose proper sphere is so exclusively the investigation of petty details, trivial anachronisms, incongruities of costume, and errors in geography, that they never attempt criticisms of a higher order without displaying their incompetence, and creating the very problems which they then strive to solve. In like manner Strauss often makes difficulties, when in reality there are none, and where many more philosophic critics have felt that there is none. Thus, to take a single example, he discovers something absolutely incredible in John's mission to Jesus, to inquire whether he was indeed the "Messiah"; which, says he, after the scene at his baptism, John *could* not doubt. The probability of such doubt, only a deeper knowledge of human nature than our critic probably possesses could teach him. When we consider the strange mutations of the human mind, under different circumstances of gladness or depression, from the liveliest hopes to the most abject fears,—the sudden cloud of scepticism which sometimes troubles the brightness of the most undoubted conviction, and from which even the mind of a Chillingworth or a Pascal has not been always free,—

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is in every man's power to be decent. If not too much to ask, we should request Dr. Strauss, in his next edition, to relapse, in this and some few other passages, into his native stolidity. It would be friendly advice, even for his own sake; for the "gods have not made him witty," any more than they made poor Audrey "poetical"; and although it is true that he might choose subjects for his unwieldy humor in which he might give less pain to his readers, it is impossible that he should choose any, however light or merry, in which such humor as his could give them pleasure. His friends should remind him that it is more easy to imitate Gibbon's infidelity than Gibbon's wit.

the transient catalepsy which will sometimes seize the strongest faith, when strongly tried; — when we add to these general considerations the particular causes of depression in the present case, partly physical, and partly mental, but all tending to produce the result in question; — the influences of suffering and imprisonment, — the "sickness of heart" which is proverbially the effect of "hope long delayed," — the obscurity and meanness of the supposed Messiah, contrasted probably with recently vivid expectations, not only of his sudden glory, but of his assumption of a too Jewish *species* of glory (for there is no reason to believe that even the Baptist was perfectly defecated from all Jewish prejudices); — when we consider all these things, the temporary invasion of painful perplexity related by the Evangelists is any thing but unnatural; and with such a doubt, the historic reality of the whole simple narrative, and Christ's words, of touching and solemn admonition, beautifully harmonize, — "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me"! To those who are deeply read in human nature, the phenomenon will produce little wonder; for we well know that men *have* come to doubt of facts of which they have been as plenarily convinced as if they had seen a miracle for their confirmation; that is, they have distrusted their own senses; and even a miracle appeals, and can appeal, to nothing stronger. In an age when a belief in the Supernatural, and that referrible to two opposite sources, was at all events common, it is still less wonderful that men should have sometimes had a momentary doubt of the heavenly source of visions, of which memory could give them no stronger proofs than of their past sensations; and even of these, it appears, men may be driven to doubt. Least of all ought *Dr. Strauss* to wonder, since, upon his principles, even if he *were* to see a miracle, he must necessarily believe that his very senses have played him false; he having predetermined that a "miracle is impossible." *

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* Even *supposing* the Gospels to be fictions or myths, we greatly doubt whether, in such cases as that here treated, the men who could compose

Dr. Strauss closes his volumes by a solemn inquiry, which not only renders it difficult to suppose that the frigidity of his temperament has not affected his heart as well as his head, but almost makes one doubt whether he be not a mythical personage himself; so contrary are all the indications it gives to those with which one would wish to associate intelligent and honorable humanity. He makes it a grave question, whether one who has ceased to believe in the historic validity of Christianity can rightfully occupy the post, and play the part — it is a very appropriate phrase — of a Christian minister and pastor in the Church of Christ; performing its rites and preaching its doctrines, in a sense totally different from that which his flock attach to them; and disguising, all the time, his real sentiments and real convictions, though he knows that the very men who listen to his words, and receive the sacred elements at his hands, would, could they penetrate his disguise, despise and abhor him as one of the most contemptible of hypocrites! Truly, with whatever success Dr. Strauss may have reduced the history of Christianity to fable, he has certainly succeeded in metamorphosing its morality, and, with that, all the morality of every other religion. Out of Germany, we believe, such a question as Dr. Strauss has calmly discussed could not be discussed at all; and even in Germany, few, it may be suspected, would choose thus openly to plead it. Well may Menzel exclaim: "In our learned age every thing depends on Hermeneutics. A man might become a Bonze, and swear upon the symbolic books of Fo, and yet, by means of a dexterous exegesis, invest the stupid books with as rational a meaning as he pleased. They do not alter the word; they swear upon it, *and think of something else*."

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such parables, describe such scenes, portray such characters, and weave such an artful texture of *quasi*-history, were not likely to be far better judges of the "psychologically improbable" than any Dr. Strauss; just as in any similar decision against Shakspeare, the chances would be that he had read Truth and Nature too profoundly for his critics.

In one respect, the work of Dr. Strauss has been of excellent service. He has done much, not indeed to render the old hypotheses of Naturalism untenable, — for that they always were, — but to expose their utter absurdity. He has very successfully unroofed and dismantled these theories, and left them in desolation. Henceforth, nothing is left their inhabitants but to migrate into the land of *myths*, or take refuge in unsophisticated Christianity.

Such a work as that of Dr. Strauss is calculated to do some service also in two other ways: 1st. Since the marks of truth and reality, the minute harmonies, and undesigned, and often most refined, coincidences in the evangelic history are much more numerous than the discrepancies, these last cannot turn the scale; while they, at least, prove most evidently that the Evangelists did not write in concert: if they had, they would, certainly in the most important cases, have taken care to obviate such objections. If they did not write in concert, then the "substantial unity" of the narratives, taken in connection with their "circumstantial variety," forms the strongest proof of their historic worth. 2dly. As many of the internal proofs of the historic truthfulness of the Scriptures have been evolved by the attacks of infidelity, and probably would have lain hidden for ages, had not infidelity elicted them, the same will assuredly be the result — and in a great measure has been so — in the present case. Many of the discrepancies, having been shown to be perfectly reconcilable, are being transferred to the other side of the account, and more and more will be so as time rolls on; while those which are *not* reconcilable, and yet cannot be *proved* to involve contradictions, are at least so many arguments for the independence of the evangelic testimonies.

It may be not unreasonably surmised that the existence of such variations, if not essential to the validity of the Gospel testimony, yet involves (such is the perverseness of man) fewer provocatives of his doubts and hostility, than any other alternative that could have been devised. In this, as in other instances, it will probably in time be discovered that God has in mercy exacted the least arduous test of man's faith which could be a reasonable test at all. It is not difficult to conjecture what course infidelity would have taken, had the testimony reached us in any other form. If the evangelical history had been attested only by one writer, it is easy to see what an uproar the generation of Strausses would have made about the absurdity of receiving such wonderful recitals on any single testimony; and, on the other hand, had there been several witnesses, and their accounts absolutely coincident, no less loud would have been the clamors about transparent collusion and conspiracy. It is proverbially hard to please those who will not be pleased; and impossible for Omnipotence itself to satisfy the perverse demands of men who are inclined to find or make reasons for rejecting what they are *not* inclined to receive. God himself cannot adopt any purely moral instruments of conviction and persuasion, of which man cannot, with self-destructive ingenuity, turn the edge.

Let us imagine a problem; — to deliver to mankind a system of facts and doctrines (making, as it is admitted the Gospel does, large demands on faith), in the most unobjectionable manner. It is evident it must depend on no *single* testimony; it must exhibit, in its *multiplicity* of testimonies, variations enough to prove that there was no concert or collusion, and agreement enough to prove their common veracity. It may well be doubted whether any product of human ingenuity would be found to fulfil all these conditions so perfectly as the four Gospels, especially viewed in conjunction with the Acts and the Epistles. The variations, at all events, are infinitely less than those which have characterized every *ordinary* cycle of myths, — those gradual formations from floating popular traditions, those shapeless embodiments of popular modes of thought and feeling, associations and tendencies. When the particles of which these consist are no longer held in solution, but condense themselves into a pseudo-historic form, they never crystallize (if we may use the expression) into so near an approach to a regular solid as is presented in the Evangelists. They are uniformly amorphous deposits. If Dr. Strauss doubts it, we commend to him an achievement worthy of his critical prowess. Let him, in relation to some such cycle of myths (for example, the Grecian mythology, or the legends of old Rome, or the stories of Robin Hood, or those of the Knights of the Round Table, or the Chronicles of Charlemagne), change places with his opponents; and while *they* state the historic discrepancies, incongruities, and contradictions, let *him* play the harmonist; and let him see whether he can reduce the difficulties which they will propose to him to any thing like the same vanishing quantities to which they have reduced the difficulties he proposes to them; and let the test of his success be this, — his being able to induce the powerful, acute, and cultivated minds, who, after the fullest investigation, persist in believing the historic verity of the Evangelists, to receive as historical the myths he shall patronize. If he shall say that it is impossible that the experiment can be tried, inasmuch as it is impossible to resuscitate a myth which has been once exploded, we reply, that, to the infidel and the heathen, the alleged "myths" of Christianity are virtually in that condition; and yet she often converts the one to the reception of them as true history, and still oftener induces the other to reject his own living myths in favor of her own alien pretensions. Dr. Strauss is welcome to attempt either course, — of convincing his infidels or converting his heathens, — with any circle of myths he shall choose to take under the protection of history.

After having tried both the frigid system of Paulus and the equally frigid system of Strauss, — the arctic and antarctic circles of theology, — equally bleak, dreary, sterile, icy, — it is to be hoped that the Germans will in time find out that there are other zones and milder skies in which they may dwell in safety; where their wanderings in quest of truth may cease, and "they may find rest unto their souls." It is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and not altogether unreasonable to hope. But assuredly they cannot have either the enviable tranquillity of the sincere Christian, or the unsafe repose of the confirmed infidel, while they will perversely aspire to the impossible luxury of being Christians and infidels at the same time, or strive to realize their arduous paradox of a "believing unbelief."

⁂ Though it was impossible, within the limits prescribed to the preceding remarks, to enter minutely into the questions of criticism involved in such a work as that of Dr. Strauss, it may be as well to point the attention of the reader, who honestly wishes information and satisfaction on the more important points, to some of the works in which he may obtain them. It were superfluous to mention Lardner's and Paley's works. Several others have recently appeared in English, and of distinguished excellence. Amongst them may be mentioned Greswell's "Harmony and Dissertations"; Robinson's "Harmony"; "The Literary History of the New Testament," an unpretending but valuable volume, in which many of the more difficult and important questions are treated in a manner likely to be all the more acceptable to multitudes of readers, inasmuch as it is free from the extreme and often tedious minuteness which distinguishes more ample works; and, lastly, Dr. S. Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," in which a large portion of the difficulties, not so much originated as compiled, digested, and exaggerated by Strauss, are discussed with great learning, acuteness, and candor.

No. II. p. 401.

WHETHER MAN IS INCOMPETENT TO JUDGE OF A DIVINE REVELATION FROM ITS CONTENTS?

This doctrine, it may be said, must be received with limitations. This is true; and the limitations are obvious enough. Neither Butler nor any one else who has asserted it can be supposed to have meant that the *whole* of Christianity is to be regarded as a system so far beyond our capacity of judging of it, that we are absolutely incompetent to pronounce on the excellence or wisdom of any *part*. Often and justly has it been maintained, that the exquisite morality of the Gospel, — both as to substance and form, — as well as many of its doctrines, are so adapted to the nature, and so approve themselves to the consciousness of man, as to furnish no insignificant indications of a divine origin.

For this reason Dr. Chalmers, who in his earlier work on the "Evidences" excluded the internal class, from the supposed incompetence of man to form a judgment on the subject, afterwards changed his mind; and, in his later work, gave this class of evidences their just place. All that can be maintained, and all that a reasonable man would venture to maintain is this; — that though we may see that many parts of Christianity are worthy of God, we are not hastily to conclude that where we do *not* see this, such *parts* do *not* come from him. This would be false logic, and unjustifiable presumption. To say that man is competent to judge of some parts and not of the whole of the system, is no more than saying of some complex machine, or some vast fabric, that enough may be known of it to justify the belief that consummate wisdom presided over its construction, though it may be impossible to penetrate the design of every part, or comprehend the bearings of the whole. It is in fact precisely what the theist says, in his argument for the existence of God, founded on the proofs from design in the visible creation. He sees enough, and more than enough, to vindicate his conclusion; but if he were to affirm that he is competent to judge of the design or coherence of the universal fabric, and to pronounce that such and such parts were unworthy of the Deity; that, like Alphonso of Castile, he could, had God been pleased to share his counsels with him, have suggested some auspicious improvements, men would laugh at him, if it were not for pity, or pity him, if it were not for horror. "The atom!" they would say. "How can he pretend to know that this or that arrangement is unworthy of the Deity!" It becomes us, in every such case, to say as Socrates did of the obscurities in the works of Heraclitus, — only with infinitely more reason, — "What I understand pleases me well; and I doubt not that what I do *not* understand would please me as well, if I did but understand it!"

No. III. pp. 407, 411.

ON THE TWO THEORIES ACCOUNTING FOR THE VARIATIONS AND DISCREPANCIES IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It must be admitted, (as indeed is expressly admitted at the close of the paragraph to which this note is appended, and subsequently, p. 411,) that it is very possible for a man who concedes the immense preponderance of the *sum* of the evidence for the truth of Christianity over the *sum* of the objections against it, to take exception to certain portions of the sacred records, historic or otherwise, as mistakes or errors of the writers, and yet apply this principle within perfectly innocuous limits; it must also be admitted that the principle in question is often in *fact* applied within such limits; that is, so applied as not to touch any thing which a candid mind would contend to be of the essence of Christianity. Such a man may ask as Paley, for argument's sake, asks in his chapter on the Discrepancies, — What can it matter to the substantial credibility of the records, if it were admitted that such and such trivial variations in the narrative, or such and such unimportant fallacies in the reasoning, had arisen, in the one case, from erroneous information, or, in the other, from Jewish modes of thinking and feeling? How is the essence of Christianity affected by it? Is any other history discredited on account of unimportant discrepancies? To many powerful and candid minds this hypothesis is satisfactory, and, as *they* apply it, it is also innocuous.

And if other men would apply the theory with the same judgment, or if it had in itself any obvious limits to control its application, the difference between it and that advocated in the essay would not be worth the ammunition to be expended in the controversy. The difference resolves itself merely into the *mode* of accounting for certain difficulties and discrepancies which both parties admit do not touch the substantial credibility of the system.

The precise point of agreement and the precise point of divergence in the two may be thus briefly stated.

Both parties agree that, on fairly weighing the entire evidence, external and internal, it is eminently improbable, or rather impossible, that Christianity should have been either a product of artful fiction, or an accidental deposit of tradition; and if it were either the one or the other, that in such an age and amidst so much necessary prejudice and opposition, its fictions or its myths should have been received as *facts;* — and that therefore the Gospel is substantially true. But both are also compelled to admit, that there are some objections which cannot be solved, and some discrepancies which cannot be reconciled. The advocate of the one hypothesis says: "I think it more probable that such discrepancies are *either* the result of the inevitable effects of the mode in which ancient books are transmitted, and which no miracles are promised to prevent; *or* that these discrepancies are such in appearance only; sometimes arising from the omission of some fact which, if stated, would reconcile them; or from some similar cause." The reasonableness of such an hypothesis he founds, both on the admitted fact that the like difficulties from the same causes exist in other writings, which, so far from being harshly assumed to be insoluble contradictions, never affect the credit given to their authors; and that in such writings, as well as in those of the New Testament, *real* solutions of many difficulties have been effected by critical recensions of the text, or by more diligent historic investigation of collateral evidence; while of others it is easy to see that many, perhaps we may say the great majority, are fairly removable by supposed omissions or supposed restrictions, which, in the silence of the writers, are just as allowable as the hypothetical assumption that no such omissions have been made, and no such restrictions are conceivable. He further thinks that this theory of accounting for the difficulties is, *à priori*, more probable than the other, because, admitting the immensely preponderant evidence for the truth of Christianity, it seems hardly supposable that, when so stupendous an intervention as is implied in miracles and prophecy had been employed to authenticate a religious system, that system was left liable to indeterminate corruption and depravation in the very *act* of propounding it to the world; — because, on inspecting the writings themselves, the very fact that such men as their authors had produced what, intellectually, morally, and historically, it seems impossible that they should ever have produced of themselves, indicates that they had undergone a metamorphosis which he cannot resolve into any thing but their subjection to divine illumination and divine superintendence; — and because he finds in their writings a great number of expressions, which, taken collectively, seem to indicate their claim to that illumination and superintendence, to a degree which excludes error from the sacred books as they were first given to the world; and that these expressions, to the full extent of their fairly interpreted meaning, are, of course, authenticated by whatever evidences substantiate any other statement of theirs.

But his great reason for distrusting the opposite hypothesis is that mentioned in the preceding essay; namely, that, in rejecting portions of the records of the canonical Scriptures as, in his judgment, errors or fallacies of the original writers, he would seem to be playing fast and loose with that general evidence which equally substantiates the claims of what he *receives* and what he *rejects;* that is, to "accept evidence where it pleases him, and to refuse it where it pleases him not." Lastly, he declares that he has no criterion for the application of the principle.

The advocate of the other hypothesis says: "I believe that, over and above the errors and discrepancies which arise out of inevitable variations of the text, and from our imperfect knowledge of facts which, if known, would demonstrate that many such errors and discrepancies are apparent only, — and many such cases I grant, — there are unimportant points, on which these writers were allowed to be occasionally misled by inaccurate information, and to fall into error under the influence of uncorrected prejudice; but I fully believe that the force of the general evidence demonstrates the substantial credibility of their statements, and the divine origin of every essential and characteristic doctrine of Christianity. As to one of the above arguments, I do *not* see that the writers claim an absolute immunity from error; and, in point of fact, do *you* not admit, that, if they did not deliver what was erroneous, it has been made so by the corruptions which the lapse of time and imperfect transmission have occasioned? And do you not also make the ultimate rejection or reception of all such matters depend on the conclusions of enlightened criticism?" "True," it is replied; "but the advantage of the former hypothesis, if logically tenable, is, that it cannot be abused; it has its own securities against that: we see from the conditions of the transmission, not of the Bible only, but of all literature, that the amount of error is within moderate limits; that it continually tends to disappear in the course of discussion and investigation; and, lastly, that the evidence by which we are to decide such points, — history, criticism, philology, — however difficult, is fairly within the grasp of our faculties, and is ultimately subject to them. But the other hypothesis has no such safeguards; it is infinitely liable to abuse. If it be admitted that the writers, from whose statements alone we can tell what Christianity is, have in many cases, and to an indeterminate extent, been misled by fallacies in reasoning and inaccuracy of information, what have we to reply to him who will apply the same principle further; who says, 'I think, *à priori*, this and this, and this and this, improbable, fanciful, illogical, false,' — and who proceeds to reject what is essential to the Christian system?" The advocate of the second hypothesis may justly reply: "He cannot do this, if (as I do) he admits the preponderant evidence for the New Testament; he cannot, so long as he has a particle of candor left, deny that there are some statements which are essential; though it may not be always easy to discriminate them. What can it matter to Christianity if we suppose Matthew or John to have erred in fixing the precise hour of the crucifixion, or whether the supper at Bethany was six or two days before the last Passover?" "True," would be the reply, "and I fully believe that you have the candor to admit, and the perspicacity to see, the very moderate limits within which your hypothesis should be applied; but surely it is better, if evidence will permit it, to have a firmer security against the want of candor or the want of sagacity in others; for this reason I still prefer the former hypothesis: — but as between *us*, and between any minds, who, admitting the general evidence for the truth of Christianity, *honestly* apply themselves to the interpretation of its records, there is no controversy worth waging, — for there will be no substantial difference."

The advocates of both hypotheses may plead that neither party is called to give an account of the *residuum* of insoluble objections; that they give their assent to conclusions established by a vast preponderance of proof independent of these objections, and are no more bound to give a positive solution of them, than a judge is bound to reconcile a few remaining discrepancies in evidence which is supported by a large excess of probabilities in favor of his decision.

This course of procedure is plainly the dictate of common sense; and is a course better understood, it appears, in philosophy than in theology, and in relation to natural theology than in relation to revealed.

When the philosopher finds some phenomena at apparent variance with a general law, founded on a large induction, he does not proceed to abandon his conclusion, but waits with patience for further light; pretty confident that it will come in time, and perfectly confident that, if it never comes, he will not be justified on this account in abandoning a conclusion supported by a thousand facts, because it is found opposed to one. In the same manner the theist (convinced, by an immense array of proofs, of the Divine wisdom and benevolence), does not allow his conclusion to be falsified because he stumbles at facts which he cannot reconcile with either. He waits for further light, and exercises the *faith* as well as the *reason* of a philosopher.

But "O these insupportable evidences!" many minds in the present day are ready to exclaim. "Are we to find our way to truth through all these tangled mazes of learning and criticism? Cannot a man be a Christian without traversing these labyrinths?"

Assuredly he may. It is happily no more necessary that a man should have examined, with the utmost degree of exactness, the whole field of the Christian Evidences, than that he must be a profound astronomer before he can be qualified to embrace the Copernican theory. A few great facts are, on most subjects, sufficient to form the convictions of men; profound knowledge in each is left to those who are necessitated, or predisposed, or at leisure to attain it; and even that profound knowledge is profound only by comparison: in reference to the possible knowledge of any subject, any man's actual knowledge may well be called superficial. Nor is there any in which the exactest study will not disclose a thousand difficulties, and provoke a thousand controversies. What then? *That* fact does not disturb our convictions, nor engage us in a life-long study of the minutiæ of any one subject; — if it did, we should never go to another, for we should never have exhausted that one. Ethics, Politics, Law, and Medicine, quite as much as Theology, furnish us with abundant examples of satisfactory conviction and resolute practice on very unsatisfactory and imperfect knowledge.

Nor, thorny as may be the controversies in which the infidel may involve the Christian, or in which the Christian may involve himself, if he be resolved to investigate this subject with the greatest possible degree of minuteness, are they more thorny than those common to any other subject, where the appeal is to "moral evidence," and where, moreover, the perception of the force of that evidence depends, in some measure, on an unprejudiced mind and a rectified will; where, as Pascal says, "the heart" is apt to whisper its "reasons, which the reason cannot comprehend." Hence no truth, such is the condition of humanity, is established without conflict and controversy; and even then it is by a very tardy process.

Lastly, it may be asked, whether those professed Christians, who in these days decry the Christian Evidences, find less controversy necessary to the establishment of any other basis of religious truth? Do they find it at all more easy to establish among mankind the claims of their "insight,"— their "natural light," — their "religious instinct," — their "intuitional consciousness"? Can they make their oracle utter a uniform response? Can they convince the bulk of men that it is an unambiguous oracle at all? Are its nature, — powers, — limits, — decisions, — less subject to doubt and disputation, than the evidences of Christianity? Are the metaphysical and ethical problems to which the one gives rise, more easy of solution than the historical problems involved in the other? Few will affirm it, who know what the history of Metaphysics and Ethics really is.

On the other hand, are those who maintain that we are to refer, amidst these difficulties, to an infallible human oracle, able to prevail on mankind to admit either its necessity or its possibility? Are they without disputes themselves in whom the infallibility resides, — or as to how far it extends?

We must be contented with our lot. On no hypothesis, by no artifice, can man evade those difficulties which form the necessary discipline, the alternate exercise of his Reason and his Faith, and by which he is trained to docility, humility, and patience. The condition of man will ever be that so forcibly painted in one of the fragments of Pascal: "Il faut avoir ces trois qualités: pyrrhonien, géomètre, chrétien soumis; et elles s'accordent et se tempèrent en doutant où il faut, en assurant où il faut, en se soumettant où il faut."

THE END.

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