

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

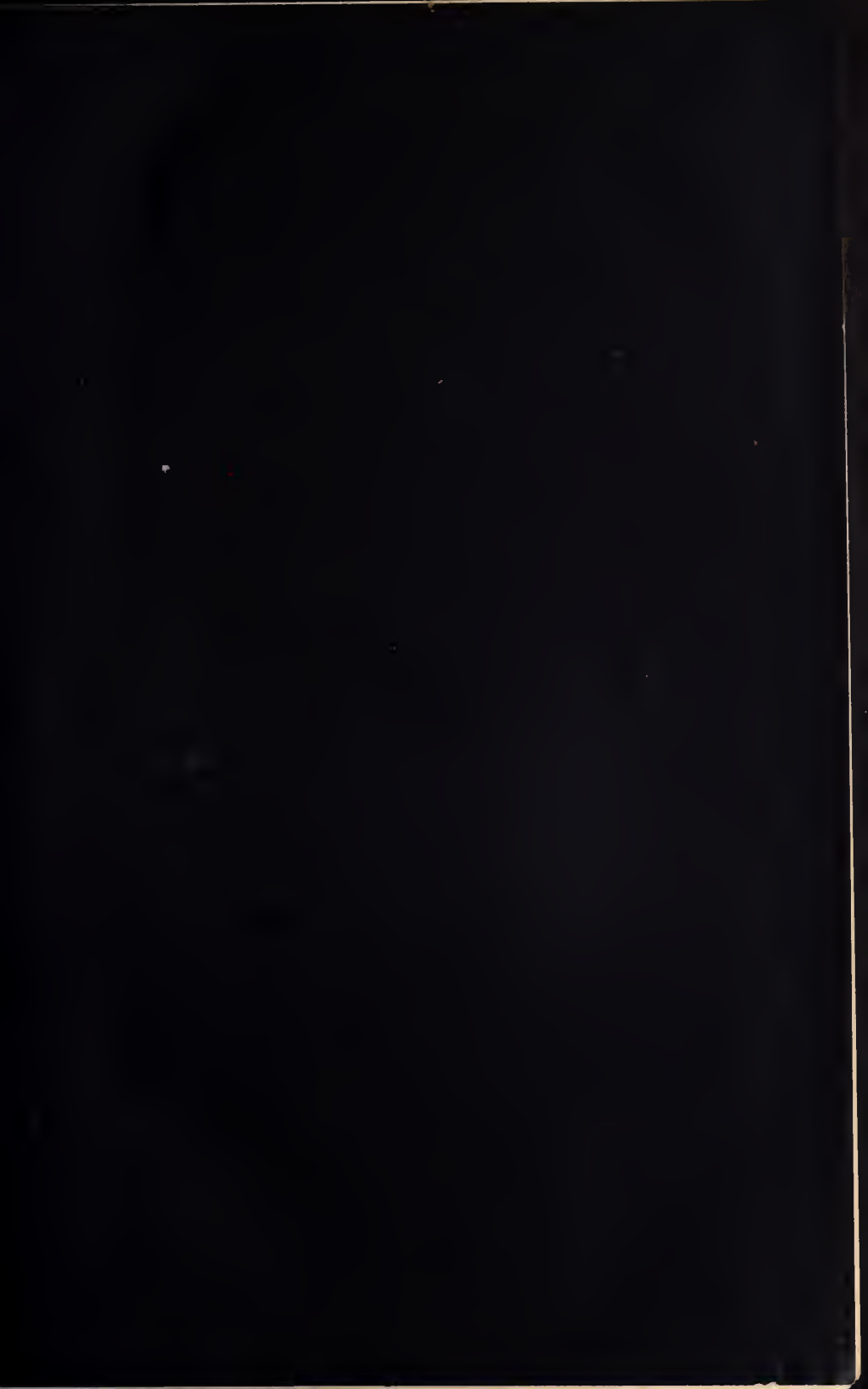
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RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

OF

CHRIST.

LONDON:
TRÜBNER AND CO.,
LUDGATE HILL.

1885.

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RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

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PART I.

Conciliation.

Prefatory Note.

MORE than once when I have mentioned how remarkably my religious persuasion has comforted and supported me in a life of infirmity, I have been urged to communicate to others what to them also might prove a blessing. I have long looked forward to this as a duty for which old age would be the most appropriate time, as it would naturally bring about a comparative retirement from the world, and couple increased leisure with increased experience. That time having come, I have devoted myself earnestly to the arranging and completing of previous notes, and now venture to offer a frank and earnest account of the way in which I have been led to study the original doctrine of Christ in a spirit unbiassed by ecclesiastical erudition, sectarian prejudices, or irreverent research. I sincerely hope that I may thus succeed in inducing others also, to seek spiritual comfort at the fountain-head.

INTRODUCTION.

My education was in a rather unusual degree cosmopolitan, and though my instruction in the tenets of the Anglican Church had for a time the advantage of being conducted by a Cambridge Undergraduate preparing for Holy Orders, and though my Father used to make up in some measure for the want of opportunities of attending divine service, by an impressive delivery of Sunday Prayers, in conformity with the English Liturgy, yet my mind did not, like the minds of sedentary believers, get so thoroughly broken in to the Anglican harness, as to jog along without feeling it. I could not help perceiving that here and there it was rather tight, and though I could not at once discover, as I have since done through the gradual experience of a life-time, that in this, as in other Creeds, the articles of faith which chafe the conscience, are as a rule more or less traceable to a worldly origin, yet I instinctively clung in preference to those more practical tenets, admirable in their simplicity, which are obviously derived from Christ Himself.

It was in the winter of 1826-27, spent at Milan, and in which I completed my 20th year, that it occurred to me to embody my notions of Christian Duty in some brief sentence which might be always present to my mind, and I adopted the following maxim: "Strive to obtain the favour of God, and to merit the esteem of Man." The first injunction included righteousness of life, self-control, charity, and in short, all those virtues which Christ has taught us to practise as the offering most acceptable to our Heavenly Father. The second precept had for its aim to foster a legitimate ambition which might give zest and spirit to my exertions for the benefit of my fellow-men, whilst it would improve the chances, and enhance the enjoyment of success. Should I at any time be inclined to let this

stimulant get the better of my sober judgment, the fear of transgressing the first precept would at once exercise a wholesome restraint.

There was something lively and hopeful in my maxim that showed it to be the child of cheerful prospects. In fact about that time I seemed to be in a fair way of recovery from my lameness, and had, notwithstanding the permanent weakness of my eyes, found out many means of interesting occupation ; but I indulged perhaps too much in them, my health became impaired, improper medical treatment aggravated the evil, and through the increased lameness and general debility which ensued, I was obliged to give up, one by one, nearly all my favorite occupations. Even conversation was impeded by neuralgic pains in my chest, so that within a year of the time when I adopted the above motto, its second phrase, relating to the esteem of Man, seemed condemned to become a mere mockery. But it is particularly in adversity that a devout study of the doctrine of Christ discloses its treasures of comfort and relief. Placing our relations with the beneficent ruler of all things on the footing of affectionate veneration and filial love, it renders evident that our task is always proportionate to our power. Madame de Staël has rightly said, “Kings are accountable not only for the evil they do, but also for the good they might do, and leave undone ;” and a similar idea is tersely expressed by the French motto, “Noblesse oblige.” Now whilst responsibility is proportionately increased by power and influence, it does not attach to them alone, and it is exceedingly instructive to canvass in gradual descent, the successive grades and varied circumstances of social life, and to mark the thousand ways in which conscientious Christians may seek to do good and promote happiness, or dispense consolation around them according to their station or their means, their mental qualifications, or their bodily abilities. Even when loss of health curtails the power

of active benevolence, fresh duties towards God and Man, fresh occasions of exercising self-control for the benefit of others, and consequently fresh opportunities for realizing the satisfaction of a conscientious adherence to the precepts of Christ, arise out of the very failure of ordinary means. Thus, when my powers of usefulness were at the lowest ebb, I felt that if I did my best to prevent my infirmities from disturbing the enjoyments or marring the serenity of those around me, I relatively did as much as I should have done, if I had spent a day of strength in fruitful activity.

The friends who have had opportunities of knowing the state of health in which I have passed a great part of my life in consequence of the remarkable number of serious accidents which have befallen me, may perhaps have been surprised that in the midst of so many infirmities, and consequently with such narrow limits to my bodily and mental enjoyments, I have nevertheless been more contented and really happier, than many men placed in circumstances apparently much more favourable. This must of course to a considerable extent be due to natural temperament; but I think I may safely say that it is also attributable to a religious feeling, not prone to wander in abstract theories, or to make itself conspicuous in outward forms, but fruitful in consoling influences, and blending itself with every occupation of mind and body.

There is in the dispensations of Providence a beautiful mechanism of compensating influences. My bodily afflictions materially promoted the turn of mind by which I could best be enabled to support them. Kept comparatively aloof from the ordinary cares, ambitions and temptations of this world, and familiarized with the thoughts of a better one, I was in some measure in a position to study the maze of life with the eye of a disinterested observer, and to devise calmly and considerately, subject to the designs of Providence, the tenour of my conduct, and the plan of my existence.

I early became impressed with the importance of that maxim of our Saviour, which teaches us that eternal happiness is not to be earned by merely crying,—“ Lord ! Lord ! ” in the emotions of speculative piety, but by earnestly and actively doing the will of the Father, striving to conquer the evil tendencies of our nature, and devoting our intelligence, our abilities and our means, to furthering the welfare of our brethren on earth. It is of course necessary that we should guard against being misled by impulsive zeal, and very essential that we should observe in our manifestations of the “ love of our neighbour,” the gradations of devotedness marked for us by the natural ties of relationship and affection.

Towards the end of August 1841, my health having been seriously impaired through mental exertion, at a time when I was insufficiently recovered from the effects of a serious accident, and consequent protracted confinement, I was on my way to seek improvement in the bracing air and refreshing scenery of the Alps. It was a bright continental summer, and as there were but few railways in those days, I suffered much from the hot weather in travelling slowly up the valley of the Rhine ; the more so, because I was not then aware how deep and durable are the ill-effects of exposure to the sun on my peculiar constitution. I never shall forget how unwell I felt one day when we made our mid-day halt at Freiburg in the Breisgau, and visited its renowned cathedral. The fragrant coolness and pleasingly tempered light which there prevailed, were not more welcome to my outer senses, than was the solemn grandeur of the imposing edifice congenial to the condition of my mind ; for it felt, as it were, half released from the routine of ordinary thought, and seemed to soar above earthly things, scanning more freely the relations of Man and his Creator, Life and Eternity. I felt intuitively that the religions which perplex and divide nations they ought to enlighten and unite, are in

reality at one in the sisterhood of a divine origin, as far as they are the natural and rational development of that holy instinct which draws men in devotion and love towards a Supreme Being, and of that intelligent conscience which teaches us to seek happiness in the fulfilment of His paternal Will. Perplexity and strife are unmistakable signs that the fountains of divine wisdom have been polluted by human interference. If this could be generally recognized, if the members of divergent faiths could agree to substitute for mutual animosities a friendly emulation, and devote to conscientious exertions in the direction of practical righteousness the energy now spent in reciprocal proselytizing, would not the several religions draw nearer and nearer to each other, as they all approached a central unity?

These truths, revealed to me, as it were, under circumstances of such impressive solemnity, have stood the test of improved health, and of an increased knowledge of the world acquired during the subsequent vicissitudes of more than forty years, and by the guidance they have afforded in my meditations, they have greatly conduced to the peaceful development of a system of religious views, for which I am too grateful not to feel desirous of affording to others an opportunity of sharing similar blessings. At the same time, however, I feel that in a matter of this description, great caution is necessary in order to succeed in giving the advice required by some, without wounding the susceptibilities of others. I have accordingly first distributed a separate tract showing, apart from all controversial topics, how a spirit of CONCILIATION may, without marked innovations, effect a gradual progress of religious improvement. I now proceed to publish those indications as Part I. of the present Pamphlet, adding as Part II., an unreserved account of my well-tried principles of earnest Christian REFORM based on the original Doctrine of Christ, and as Part III., a few suggestive outlines of practical ORGANIZATION.

Measures of Conciliation.

THE following is a suggestive Syllabus of Fundamental Principles susceptible of being agreed to by the members of all Religions, and of forming a bond of union between them. These Principles being virtually included in nearly all Creeds, there is reason to believe that a preliminary appeal to representative men of various Religions, such as Christians, Jews, Mahometans, Buddhists, Hindoos or Parsees, would meet with an encouraging response. A judicious organization of the Alliance would then attract spontaneous adhesions, and secure practical results.

PROPOSED UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

Principles of Faith.

The Universe proclaims the Glory of the Almighty, without whom all would be motionless, inert, and dead.

Motion, change, and life are the results of Forces acting in obedience to permanent Laws. Those Laws are dictates of an unerring Will, permanent manifestations of a Supreme Mind, the Mind of the Universe, which is God.

We possess Moral Instincts which assist our Reason, had extend the sphere of its perception. On the other hand what genuine Instinct reveals, genuine Reason confirms. It is through their joint influence that we are taught :—

- 1stly. To acknowledge God as our Almighty Father, to adore and to pray.
- 2ndly. To consider as a duty towards God, that we should exert ourselves on earth for the welfare of our fellow-creatures.
- 3rdly. To cherish the hope of a future existence.

Purpose and Means.

The purpose of this Alliance is the furtherance of the welfare of Mankind, without distinction of Race or Creed, by active means as regards material things, and by conciliatory means as regard spiritual things.

The Members of the Alliance do not consider it desirable to subvert suddenly any existing form of worship, except so far as it may be mixed with acts of vice or cruelty, and unsusceptible of improvement.

They do not allow acrimonious discussions on either religious or social questions, but readily commune on such subjects in a friendly spirit, endeavouring to consider everything on its own merits, without favour or prejudice.

They freely suggest to Members belonging to a different persuasion from themselves, means whereby they conceive that that persuasion may be improved in practice, without being subverted. They willingly give their attentive consideration to suggestions offered to them in a similar spirit; and of their own accord, they notice and study in the various forms of worship, any usages or devices which appear to produce good practical results, and to be susceptible of being safely and conscientiously adopted.

They consider that the upright and enlightened men of all Creeds, who seek conscientiously to improve their respective Religions, divesting them of whatever has sprung from a worldly origin, or degenerated into an abuse, and striving in all purity and simplicity of heart to elevate themselves towards God the common Father of all, cannot fail to converge in gradual approximation towards each other, and that this is the true and legitimate means of arriving at Unity of Religion.

PROPOSED CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE, OR CHRISTIAN
BRANCH OF THE UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE.

Leading Tenets.

The bonds of tolerance and good-will uniting the Members of the Universal Alliance, would be drawn closer in the present Institution, intended to knit together for purposes of charity and improvement the various Christian Denominations.

The rallying ground of Christians should be the "Doctrine of Christ," that is to say, the holy truths taught by Christ, which directly or indirectly form a code of Practical Morality and Universal Brotherhood.

Faith in Christ involves a sincere belief in the sanctity of Christ's teaching, a devout and loving acceptance of his precepts, and an earnest determination to carry them out practically, uniting in the aspirations of a lively Faith, *Purity, Charity and Futurity.*

Among the essential bearings of Christ's teaching, are the following:—

1st. To blend Morality with Religion, and Religion with the concerns of Daily Life, not so much in outward form, as in mental aspirations and in practical conduct, so that as far as possible, our thoughts, words, and actions, may be biassed by a constant spiritual communion with our Heavenly Father, and by a steadfast determination to do His Holy Will.

2nd. To connect intimately with the Love of God, a sentiment of Brotherly Love towards our fellow-creatures; a sentiment ever active, thoughtful, and conscientious, free alike from the errors of impulsiveness, and from the trammels of prejudice and intolerance.

Every one aspiring to partake of the blessings which flow from the moral doctrine of Christ, should joyfully

accept its inherent responsibilities; he should strive manfully to acquire and maintain the mastery of his propensities, and not lightly have recourse to any device for quieting his conscience, and for effecting a compromise between Virtue and Sin.

It behoves the Christian to cultivate with thankfulness the faculties of mind with which it has pleased God to endow him; constantly directing his studies towards those attainments through which he may hope best to promote the welfare of himself, and of his neighbours.

He should acknowledge with all humility the limits beyond which his researches would be rash, futile and profane. The manner in which Christ discouraged the curiosity even of his own Disciples, abundantly shows that Man should not presume to scrutinize and discuss the constitution of "heavenly things."

Christ's moral teaching was so simple and natural, and in every way so well adapted to the comprehension and requirements of the masses of the people, that it could be appreciated by the humblest, and could find an echo in every heart. Mitigating the severity and exclusiveness which characterized the Mosaic Law, he substituted for a stern impersonation of the Supreme Being, the more expanded and milder attributes of the Heavenly Father of all Mankind, and crowned these invaluable improvements with a hopeful prospect of the life to come.

CONCILIATORY PROGRESS.

An eminent Archbishop of Paris called one day on the leading Pastor of the Protestant Community, and pre-
faced the business which brought him there by saying,—
"Charity is a neutral ground on which all persuasions
may join hands and work harmoniously."—Now the

doctrine of Christ is Charity itself in its widest sense ; it is the philosophy of universal peace and good-will, and welcomes all who aspire to work for the welfare of their fellow-men.

Manifold and often strange as are the spiritual conditions of modern society, for practical purposes they may generally be gauged by our Saviour's test, that is to say—"by their fruits."—Willing workers who have proved themselves not wanting in useful qualifications, may from opposite extremes, sometimes be brought nearer, by simply showing them in natural shape and colour, things which seen from their particular point of view, had a deceptive appearance. We have on the one hand strict churchmen and rigid sectarians brought up from their childhood to consider progress as dangerous in matters of religion, and to look upon orthodoxy as synonymous with truth. Let them mix with spiritual strangers in a charitable intent, like that which animated the good Samaritan, and they will gradually perceive that the "Light of Life," which our Saviour brought into the world, and the "Truth" with which he taught men to worship their Creator, are essential elements of spiritual, as well as of intellectual development and progress. On the other hand, we see philosophers who, attributing to religion in general the blame deserved by some form of religion in particular, have devised independent tenets of their own, and scientists who reject what cannot be demonstrated by positive proof, or accounted for by known agencies, forgetting that the progress of discovery, advancing as it has advanced, will enable the learned men of future ages to look down with knowing eyes on the comparative ignorance of our times. Now philosophers, scientists, and churchmen may alike be judged "by their fruits." If their respective persuasions have the effect of rendering them selfish and unscrupulous, they may indulge in the pride of isolation ; but if, as I trust is the case with the majority, their hearts are honest,

their aims are noble, and they are really alive to the happiness of doing good, let them increase their usefulness by joining hands without distinction of creed, on the neutral ground of Charity. They will find that in thus toiling harmoniously, their mutual distrust and antipathy will diminish by degrees, and be replaced by the sort of feeling which unites fellow-passengers on a stormy sea, till at last they are ready, not only to work together at the pumps on an emergency, but occasionally to exchange a few friendly words with the pilot at the helm, who whatever may be the cut and colour of his coat, is steering by the one true magnetic guidance, for the one true haven of rest.

PART II.

Reform.

CHAPTER I.—CHRISTIANITY PAST AND PRESENT.

SECTION 1.—EXPLANATORY REMARKS.

I HAVE explained through what peculiar circumstances my religious views were guided into a course of development so conducive to peace of mind and contentment, as to have made me happier in times of trial, than most persons seem to be in the sunshine of life. I related how I became deeply impressed with the advantages which mankind at large might derive from a spirit of conciliation, and proceeded to show in what manner tolerance and good-will might, under the divine blessing, replace religious feuds and sectarian animosities, and bring nations to converge by degrees towards the Unity of Truth. It is true that considerable as may be in course of time the actual progress resulting from such conciliatory relations, yet nevertheless in order to secure a satisfactory rate of substantial improvement, each Christian Community must, as a rule, look with sincere earnestness into its own affairs, correcting abuses, examining its ecclesiastical organization, and quietly removing any imperfections of principle or practice. On the other hand, the studies and meditations of more than forty years have comforted me with the conviction that a safe and simple means of guidance for such

Christian reforms, is afforded by the original Doctrine of Christ; guidance fraught with present peace and hopeful prospects.

In now venturing to communicate my comforting convictions for the benefit of others, it will I fear be impossible to avoid altogether giving offence, as I trust I have done in suggesting principles of universal Conciliation. It was in the essence of those principles to eschew all controversial questions, whereas in upholding the original Doctrine of our Saviour, I shall necessarily have to encounter opposition proportionate to the importance of the deviations from that doctrine which are to be rectified, to the length of time during which those deviations have become consolidated, and to the interests which stand in the way of any interference with the established routine. I need not however fear being accused of infidelity in seeking faithfully to bring back to the holy words of Jesus, those whom human theories have led astray. It is by using as a touchstone the admirable sentiments which those words convey, that I hope to show the difference between the true gold of genuine Religion, and the tinsel of human alloys. A careful comparison of the Mosaic with the Christian Dispensation, will bring into bright relief the superiority of the latter, and prepare the way for an unreserved devotion to its holy mandates. The spirit of the times favors indeed a full appreciation of the doctrine of universal beneficence brought into the world by our Saviour, and I trust that the period is not far distant, when the faithful Disciples of Christ may be able to inaugurate peacefully the reign of His "Holy Word," (*λόγος*), for the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Mankind.

SECTION 2.—BRIEF RETROSPECT.

It is the growth of concordant views in thousands of individual minds, that constitutes public opinion in a free country, and it is through its mighty development, known as the "spirit of the times," that the best and most durable reforms are worked out peacefully and almost imperceptibly. A reform of this description is now progressing with purposes and prospects, for the better appreciation of which a brief Retrospect may be of service.

Though the doctrine of Christ was pre-eminently clear and practical, inculcating in simple terms filial devotion to the will of our Father in Heaven, and brotherly devotion to the welfare of our fellow-men, it was through a variety of causes which we shall by-and-by have an opportunity of examining, soon so mixed up with the traditions of Judaism, and so obscured with the mystical devices of dreamy philosophers, as to lose its original character amidst confusion, heresy and strife. When order was established in East and West, it was the order of ecclesiastical domination thriving on dogmas that awed the imagination, in proportion as they perplexed the mind. Moreover, advantage was astutely taken of the common propensity of mankind, first to follow their inclination, and then to find an excuse for it. People willingly gave up the exercise of their reason in exchange for the comfort of being mystically led to salvation with a minimum of thought and self-sacrifice, by the official trustees of the keys of Heaven, and their secular rulers gladly bought with a show of humility, and with substantial liberalities from the public treasury, the favor of a Church which held itself ever ready to pass the sponge over their misdeeds. In short, clerical theories acquired such thorough possession of the

Christian world, that when in the early part of the 16th century their abuses ripened to a general crisis of reformation, scarcely any thought was entertained of a return to the simple and practical morality of Christ. Dogmatic teaching, and consequently dogmatic divergencies, prevailed even in the reformed churches. Hence the vagaries of sectarianism, which have reached in this country something approaching to a climax. A long habit of liberty has engendered in our active-minded population, a tendency to push its energies of every kind to extremes, and as people are equally free to preach everything, and to believe nothing, no wonder that one is constantly shocked, on the one hand by barefaced professions of atheism, and on the other hand by an exaggeration and a perversion of religious dogmas carried to the very verge of the grotesque. Sensation is the order of the day, and all the while a commercial spirit makes capital of the surging to and fro of ignorant multitudes, whilst in higher social spheres, fashion prescribes, even in matters ecclesiastical, the thing to do.

SECTION 3.—MODERN THOUGHT.

Nevertheless an attentive observer may discover in this turmoil, a growing current of Modern Thought, which if left to chance influences, might create mischief, but which might under judicious guidance, safely accomplish one of those gradual reforms which I have just described as the peaceful and durable result of a general consent.—The development of education within the last fifty years has given to cultivated minds an increased love for the free exercise of *thought*, proportionate to the increased facilities afforded for making a profitable use of it. If piously inclined, they regard this noble faculty as an inestimable privilege, separating us from the brute creation, and bringing us in some

measure into direct communication with our Heavenly Father. They cherish it as the organ of penitence and all good resolve, and as the inward medium of meditation, thanksgiving, praise and prayer, and they naturally take umbrage at the mystical devices interposed by official religion, to prevent their directly approaching the Almighty with ingenuous supplications. Thus suspicions of interested interference on the part of the Church obtrude themselves on those who would fain be its staunch supporters, and a painful conflict arises between their reasoning conscience, and a natural attachment to ideas and forms of worship endeared to them by juvenile reminiscences and family ties. They have perhaps recourse to collating the best theological authorities, but soon turn away disheartened and disgusted from a maze of conflicting arguments and acrimonious discussions, often hinging on the strained interpretation of a few ambiguous words. They then take up in a spirit of fairness, some epitome of the results arrived at by modern commentators in erudite investigations of the canonical scriptures, and of the origin and successive developments of Christianity, and their misgivings as to human interference with heavenly things, are confirmed beyond expectation. Doubts engender doubts, till for many a thinker it were better he had never thought; for the books which are so useful in correcting spurious notions, do not generally mark the difference between thus clearing away human devices from the divine ground-work of religion, and involving in scepticism that ground-work itself. Unless he be clear-headed enough to see these limits, and strong-minded enough to check at will the impetus of his mental career, he may, like the unhappy gamester, lose his self-control in a fever of excitement. He plunges deeper and deeper, stakes his last chance of happiness, and wakes to remorse and despair in the cold pitiless abyss of Materialism.

SECTION 4.—STUDY OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

How fortunate are those searchers after the light of truth, who either guided by the advice of an experienced friend, or favored by exceptional circumstances, have been induced to make a special study of the original Doctrine of Christ, and having well ascertained its true character and essential attributes, use that doctrine itself as a test for detecting and eliminating all incongruous results of human interference! Not only is this test more satisfactory than any other to a Christian mind, but whilst it disposes summarily of untenable outworks, it leaves the central citadel of faith more firmly established than before. No sane person can impugn, and no earthly power can shake the principles of righteousness and love which form the basis of Christ's teaching. The most elaborate philosophical reasoning could produce nothing more satisfactory to a healthy intellect, or more congenial to an unsophisticated conscience, more conveniently applicable to the varied aspects and requirements of social life, or more capable of promoting peace and mutual good-will among men, or better calculated to foster the development of a sound intelligence, of moderate views, and of genuine happiness, than the code of wisdom and morality provided for us by our Saviour.

Some of my friends may remember a paper written about twelve or fourteen years ago as the first of an intended series of discourses on the "Principles and Practice of Christianity," and on the first page of which was the following:—

"Come to Jesus all ye who are lame and vacillating in spirit, and whose mental vision is obscured by the mists of theological controversy; for he teacheth the

blind to see, and the lame to walk, and rendereth clear and straight the way of salvation.”

The earnestness with which I described the pure original doctrine of our Saviour as the true source of spiritual health and comfort, and as a never-failing treasure of happiness and consolation, was founded on experience of the most conclusive kind, which already embraced a considerable period of my life, and which has been fully confirmed during the years which have since elapsed. Still I should be sorry to obtrude new views on persons who are quite happy in their own; but there are thousands whose consciences are sorely tried by the theoretical paradoxes and practical failings of their respective churches, yet they dare not indulge in thoughts of reform, lest, venturing to leave the beaten track, they should wander away from Christ. How gladly would they follow the guidance of their reason, if they knew that it would on the contrary lead them to a haven of spiritual rest, hallowed by the perpetual echoes of his voice!

That a complete analytical study of the records of Christ's holy teaching is not without difficulties, will be shown in a future section specially dealing with that subject; but it is comparatively easy to arrive at a clear appreciation of those fundamental principles, on the value of which all commentators are agreed, and which find confirmation in every healthy conscience, and an echo in every honest heart. Thus a perfectly reliable and authoritative standard is produced, by means of which the faithful disciple of Christ can test whatever is of dubious character in the present doctrine or practice of christianity, and separate the false from the genuine, the human adulteration from the divine original. In doing this, he becomes more and more impressed with the fact that the aberrations and failures of the Christian Churches, the cruelties perpetrated in their name, and especially their opposition to intellectual

progress, are mainly the result of the connection established in the early days of Christianity, between it and the traditions of Judaism, whereby the dispensation of Christ was almost made a mere corollary of that of Moses. We shall by-and-by be better in a position to understand the causes which led to this unfortunate alliance. It is now more urgent to determine clearly on what points the two dispensations harmonise, and on what others they are antagonistic, and consequently to what extent cautious discrimination should be exercised in using the Old Testament for purposes of Christian education, what distinction may without irreverence be made between historical records and legendary traditions, and how the religion of the Gospel may be emancipated from an incongruous connection with the mystical events of Eden.

CHAPTER II.—THE MOSAIC AND CHRISTIAN
DISPENSATIONS.*

SECTION 1.—THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

TAKING our Lord's solemn utterances at the well in Samaria, in connection with the general tenour of his divine precepts, we have the following fundamental notions of the Divine Attributes:—

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”—He is the Spirit of the Universe, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent.—We are to love Him as the Heavenly Father of mankind, and the way to love Him is to do His Will. And His Will is that we should live in righteousness and self-control, contentment and peace; and that we should seek our happiness in promoting that of others, and hope for our reward in a life to come.

Let us now turn to the Mosaic Dispensation.

We sincerely admire the characteristic feature of *Monotheism*, or worship of one God, which so strikingly distinguishes it, from the *Polytheism*, or worship of many gods, prevalent amongst most nations in those times. But we cannot help regretting the egotistic spirit with which the Jews, instead of indulging in a generous propaganda, sought to keep their God to themselves. It seems also unfortunate that the worship of Jehovah was confined to one central seat of religion,

* “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” John i. 17.

a circumstance which proving exceedingly inconvenient to outlying communities, may have contributed not a little to the tendency to idol worship of which they gave such frequent instances, and even to the secession of the Ten Tribes.

The idea that God created Man after His own image might have been comparatively harmless, if it had been used only as a metaphorical expression of the mental superiority of Man above the brute creation, or confined to poetical imagery. When the Psalmist says,—“He came flying on the wings of the wind,” or when Milton ventures on his heavenward flights, we are carried away by their poetic genius to a forgetfulness of the difference which exists between their poetic imagery, and the high conception of an Omnipresent Spirit. Again, we may condone, though we cannot approve of the words of Moses, that God spoke to him “face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend.” Too often, however, instead of an aspiring flight of imagination, we see what is known as Anthropomorphism, that is to say, the profane reduction of divine attributes to the standard of humanity.

I was about 14 years old when, in reading my Bible lesson, I was struck with the impropriety of representing the omniscient and omnipresent Master of the Universe as on His way to *verify a doubtful report by personal inspection*, and saying to Abraham, “Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which has come unto me; and if not, I will know.” (Genesis xviii. 20–21.) A similar uncertainty as to the exact state of things is implied in the discussion which follows, as to the number of just men who might be found in the profligate cities, and whose presence might ensure safety from destruction. Another passage which I could not help noticing, was the one so derogatory to the power of the Almighty which occurs in Judges i. 19 :—“And

the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.”—Still more regrettable than these sins against Omniscience, Omnipresence and Omnipotence, are those passages which cast profane aspersions on the goodness, equity, and merciful-kindness of the Almighty, and bring into play the evil foibles of humanity. Such for instance are the following:—

Jealousy. “For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (Ex. xxxiv. 14.)

Angry Menace. See Leviticus xxvi. 27–29. Too painful to be quoted.

Wrath and Change of Mind are expressed in Ex. xxxii. 10, where the Lord is represented as saying to Moses respecting the people of Israel, “Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them,” sentiments which however yielded to the intercession of Moses, for we read at the 14th verse that “the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

Indiscriminate Slaughter is but too vividly depicted in the wholesale destruction of the tribes that were so unfortunate as to be possessors of the fair land promised to the chosen people.*

Almost equally profane, though less cruel, are the instances of favor shown to the inventors of fraud and the perpetrators of iniquity; to say nothing of that leading feature of the Old Testament, the covenant or compact entered into with Abraham for distinguishing his posterity above all other nations, by a perpetual favoritism.

* See also Joshua x.

SECTION 2.—SACRIFICES.

We read in the 8th chapter of Genesis of Noah's sacrifice after the Deluge, and that "the Lord smelled a sweet savour." I was early struck by this instance of Anthropomorphism, but it was some time before I noticed its connection with the custom of Sacrifices in general. We may assume that they originated in a desire to solemnize men's grateful recognition of bounties received, or his earnest prayers for bounties to come, and the idea of a savoury smell carried upwards by volumes of rising smoke towards the heavenly region where their gods were supposed to live, may account for the institution of burnt sacrifices among savage tribes, and for the maintenance of the custom among comparatively civilized nations. Familiarized with ancient mythology, I was naturally inclined to put the best complexion on the hecatombs of the Greeks and Romans, though I might sometimes think that as far as the production of mere fumes was concerned, Jupiter would have been as well off, if instead of burning to ashes the joints, and feeding on toasted entrails, they had reversed the operation, feeding on the joints, and burning the entrails. Or again, a smell more savoury than that of burnt carcases, would have ascended from viands slowly and carefully roasted, which might afterwards have been devoutly eaten, as one now drinks to the health of those to whom honour is due.

Thoughts like these could be indulged in with a light heart in connection with the strange phantasmagoria of heathen mythology, but it was with feelings of unmitigated regret, that I found that orthodox members of my own dear faith were inclined to sanction among the Jews, practices which they regarded among contemporaneous nations as heathenish and foolish; that in fact I was expected to believe on the authority of Moses, that

sins were to be atoned for, gratitude to be expressed, and favors to be solicited, by deeds of unnecessary and therefore sinful cruelty, and that men's prayers best ascended to Heaven where the earth was reeking with the blood of victims.*

It was to me an immense relief to listen to the voice of our Saviour proclaiming "God is a Spirit," and thus absolutely condemning those ignorant assimilations of Divine to human nature, from which sprung the idea of gratifying the Lord with savoury fumes.—Further, "God must be worshipped in spirit," thus enjoining in lieu of burnt offerings, the spiritual sacrifice of our sinful inclinations at all times, and of our innocent ones when duty commands.—Again, He must be worshipped "in truth," that is to say, in earnestness, sincerity and reality; strictly avoiding all equivocation, substitution and pretence.

When at the festival of harvest-home a goodly array of the products of the soil marks the thankfulness of the congregation, the benefit accrues, not to the Lord, for these products would be equally his wherever they might be, but to those whose hymns of praise and thanksgiving are inspired by that pleasing spectacle with more fervent emotions, and whose hearts are warmed with the consciousness that all these good things are destined for the poor.—The case is entirely different with a Sacrifice, in which pious emotions of gratitude are marred by the heart-hardening sight of struggling victims and priestly butchers, blood, agony and death. The feelings of the

* Sacrifices are strongly condemned in the first chapter of Isaiah, who in the name of the Lord says,—“I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats.”—I once came across a tract on the subject of Sacrifices. It made out that blood thus shed was acceptable to the Almighty, that this was proved by the Mosaic ordinances, and that it was in some measure a sound instinct that led the heathen to immolate animals on the altars of their deities. Its pages were so absurd and so disgusting, that I burnt it, which I now regret, for it is instructive to see how far men can go, without discovering that they are on the wrong track.

assembled throng are perverted by the profane idea that this is acceptable to the Deity, and filial love is stifled by awe and terror. All this is at absolute variance with the instruction of Christ to address God as "Our Father which art in Heaven." But a still more serious profanation of his doctrine of Truth, Righteousness and Charity, is involved in the principle introduced with deplorable results in the Mosaic Dispensation, of *Atonement*, that is to say, of guilt atoned for by the sufferings of innocence, or in other words, of the appeasement of the Divine wrath, through the redemption of the guilty by the sufferings of guiltless substitutes. Thus the sinner was supposed to have more or less expiated his sin when a bleeding victim had expired in his behalf on the altar of the Lord, and the consciences of a whole congregation were refreshed when a miserable Scape-goat, loaded with curses, was driven out to perish in the desert waste.—It was through a similar confusion of ideas that God was supposed to visit the sins of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation, and that in a far more comprehensive way, the whole race of mankind was condemned to pay the penalty for the sin of our first parents in Eden.

SECTION 3.—A FUTURE LIFE.

One of the most startling of the many discoveries which the Christian student makes in reading the Old Testament by the light of the New, is that the Mosaic dispensation actually ignored the prospect of a future life. As has been rightly remarked by a distinguished authority, this omission is the more extraordinary as the Hebrews in general through their sojourn among the Egyptians, and Moses in particular through his education at the court of Pharaoh, might have been expected to have imbibed such ideas of a future state as prevailed in

Egypt.* Notwithstanding the considerable development to which the idea of recompense and punishment after death, had attained among the Greeks and Romans, its progress among the Jews, even after their return from captivity, was desultory and erratic. The Messianic prophecies may be considered as mostly relating to the coming of a temporal prince, rather than of a spiritual redeemer, and the religious condition of the nation at the advent of our Saviour, was in this as in almost every other respect, very far from satisfactory. Of the three principal sects, only one, that of the Essenes, numerically small and somewhat resembling in its organization a monastic community, held doctrines of a satisfactory character respecting a life hereafter. The notions of a future existence held by the important sect of the Pharisees, were little better than a kind of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. In fact, their hypocritical puritanism, their exaggerated observance of outward forms and ceremonies, and their conceited and selfish pride, suited them for upholding, not for improving, the sacerdotal regime of the Mosaic dispensation. Yet singularly enough the chiefs of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, including the ex-high priest Annas, and his son-in-law Caiaphas, then holding that office, before both of whom in succession Christ was led previously to appearing at the tribunal of Pilate, belonged to the sect of the Sadducees, who absolutely denied a future state. Thus it is not too much to say that, leaving apart a few eminent prophets, the Mosaic Creed was from its institution about B.C. 1491, to the time of our Saviour's death, A.D. 33, tainted with a deplorable scepticism.

* See Dr. W. B. Carpenter's "Egypt and the Egyptians."—The Revd. Ch. Merivale in his "History of the Romans under the Empire" (vol. iii. p. 372) says, in speaking of the Sadducees, named from the sacerdotal family of Sadok, "They repudiated the notion of a future state, because they could not read it from Genesis to Deuteronomy."

SECTION 4.—THE MOSAIC INSTITUTIONS.

Few if any of the great law-givers of antiquity have had to deal with a nation more restless, stiff-necked, and ungrateful, than the people of Israel, or have had to create national institutions under more adverse circumstances than those with which Moses had to deal. We must all the more gratefully admire and maintain those among his moral ordinances which are in unison with the voice of our conscience, and which our Saviour confirmed. There is much also in other branches of his legislation which betokens a chieftain well fitted by genius and education, to lead a wild race, through a wild region, to war and conquest. He cleverly subjected the Israelites to a theocratic form of government, well calculated, as far as human foresight could reach, to curb their seditious spirit, and he showed at the same time a laudable appreciation of the great services rendered him by his brother Aaron, in giving to his posterity, and to the Tribe of Levi to which he belonged, a firm and permanent hold on the nation.—Considering the practices prevalent in antiquity, it would not be a matter of surprise, and indeed scarcely a cause for censure, if in order to secure to his people the permanent benefit of his laws, Moses represented them as given by the command and under the authority of the Most High, or in other words, by Divine Inspiration. Nor could it much be wondered at, if the Pentateuch, in order to flatter the patriotic pride of the Children of Israel, was so framed as to unite the traditional annals of their forefathers, with a solemn mystical legend of the origin of the world.

For us Christians, all this is matter of lively interest, because Christ himself belonged to the Jewish race; but whilst we admire in Moses an unequalled combination of the patriot, the chieftain, the legislator and

the author, we must not allow his laws or his writings to interfere with the divine principles of our Saviour's doctrine. Certain incompatibilities have already been alluded to, as for instance, the unaccountable error of omission committed by Moses in ignoring altogether a future life, and the grave errors of commission resulting from a mundane conception of the Supreme Being. This, as we have seen, included a system of sacrifices disgusting in itself, and profane when implying that God is gratified with the sight of blood, or the smell of savoury fumes. Of course it was still more profane to attribute to our Heavenly Father, the ordering of the massacre of the nations which had the misfortune to be in possession of the promised land. It was scarcely less so to affirm that the Lord actually condemned to the cruel death of stoning, the unfortunate man who had picked up sticks on the Sabbath day, whereas the Divine Will was pointedly expressed by Christ in the words, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The harsh retaliatory spirit of many of the penal laws, is sufficiently well known to dispense with quotations, and as regards the civil laws, it may suffice for the present to call to mind that the institution of slavery or bondage, so repulsive to the true Christian conscience, was distinctly recognised by several ordinances, which it is impossible to consider as coming from the mouth of God, and notably by the following:—"Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." (Leviticus xxv. 44.)

If intrinsic evidence did not sufficiently show the irreverence of attributing the Mosaic Institutions to the direct intervention of the Almighty, there is another test supplied by Christ, which alone would suffice to settle the question, namely, His well-known maxim "By their fruits ye shall know them." Everything devised by God accomplishes to perfection its appointed purpose,

whereas the Mosaic Institutions entirely failed to secure to the Jewish race a permanently and uniformly prosperous existence. Few nations have had a more undesirable history than that related of the Israelites in the Bible. Not only were they constantly distracted by wars and discord, but owing probably in great measure to the extreme inconvenience entailed on outlying communities by the excessive centralisation of Divine Worship, they became divided into two hostile peoples ; so that whereas twelve tribes were originally included in the prospective benefits of the Lord's covenant with Abraham, only two, besides the Levitical priesthood and their dependants, ultimately monopolised its advantages under the name of Jews. The others, after forming for a period the so-called Kingdom of Israel, were carried into captivity by the Assyrians, and so utterly disappeared, that at the present time they would be almost entirely forgotten, if speculative writers and sensational lecturers did not occasionally start some new resuscitation of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel. These occurrences and the subsequent disasters of the Kingdom of Judah, would not concern my present purpose, were it not that being more or less the *fruits* of the Mosaic Institutions, they militate against ascribing to these a divine origin.

Even in the period which elapsed between the return from Babylon, and the advent of Christ, a period which, for the want of a general knowledge of the events which troubled it, is often considered as one of comparative peace and progress, the Jews were far from profiting morally, as much as might have been expected, by the lessons of adversity. It was but too natural that a selfish and crafty priesthood, relying for its authority over them on their implicit reverence for the Bible, should take mundane advantage of the privilege of being the official depositaries of the sacred Book, and of determining what writings were to be considered as canonical, and what as apocryphal. They had worthy supporters in the Scribes, who were the authorized

transcribers and expounders of Holy Writ, and to whom conjointly with the sect which carried to the greatest excess the upholding of the Mosaic Dispensation, in all its ritualistic details, our Saviour repeatedly addressed the well-known anathema—"Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

It is scarcely probable that men of such stamp would feel more compunction in altering obscure texts according to their mind, than in distorting the interpretation thereof to suit their inclination. Strange instances are related of the extent to which this latter licence was carried, in the controversies concerning the Mosaic Law, between the rabbinical school headed by Shammai, the upholder of rectitude, and the far more numerous one headed by Hillel, the advocate of easy-going manners. Thus on the question of Divorce, treated rather ambiguously in Deuteronomy, it is said that the disciples of the latter went so far as to allow that privilege to a man who saw another woman that pleased him better than his wife, or who could show that the latter had over-salted his soup.

It was indeed an arduous task to introduce improvement where the very sources of morality were contaminated. No wonder that our Saviour's doctrine of righteousness and truth, found so few echoes in this turmoil of iniquity, and that when he cast on its gloom the clear "Light of Life," "the darkness comprehended it not."*

* A recent Hebrew commentator, Dr. Christian D. Ginsburg, has thrown much light on the endeavours made to establish and preserve the original readings of the Old Testament by means of marginal notes, added by the various transcribers, and of which the entirety constitutes the so-called "Massorah." These notes bear evidence of the multifarious difficulties which had to be surmounted, and seem hitherto scarcely to have achieved a satisfactory result, for the present Massoretic Text is pronounced to be "by comparison incomplete, imperfect, incorrect and corrupt," and the conclusion has been arrived at, that "human nature is fallible and scribes are often ignorant, indolent or perverse."—It appears that the extant MSS. of the Old Testament are not of earlier date than the 9th century A.D.

SECTION 5.—RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

Not long ago a discussion on educational measures in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, brought up the question of the supposed antagonism between Science represented by Darwin, and Religion represented by the Bible. The following brief extracts from the speeches pronounced on that occasion by the liberal Prof. Virchow and the ultramontane leader Herr Windthorst, give an idea of the wide difference of views between some advanced German Protestants, and the Roman Catholics, whose tenets may, in this particular instance, be considered as representing those of nearly all orthodox Christian denominations.

Virchow: . . . The Bible itself represents the creation as the result of acts purely material. . . . The doctrine of seven days has nothing to do with Christianity; it is a work purely human, a legend derived from paganism. If theologians undertake to maintain the infallibility of the Bible, they place themselves in conflict, not only with science, but also with philosophy.

Windthorst: . . . The results of science agree to demonstrate that the Bible contains the truth, the Mosaic conception of the Creation is inseparable from the Christian religion, the doctrine of the Messiah, and the sacrifice of Golgotha.

In an unfinished Memorandum on Religion and Science written many years since, I argued at some length that antagonism between these two great elements of our intellectual existence is a misconception; that they are Sisters born to love each other, and that when they disagree, it is that one or the other, or both, must have gone astray.—Imitating the wisdom with which Christ silenced those who questioned Him concerning the tribute money, we ought to render unto Science the

Knowledge of Nature and her Laws, and unto Religion the Knowledge of Spiritual and Moral Philosophy.—Religion teaches us devoutly to acknowledge a Supreme Being, the Mind of the Universe, whose immutable, unerring and omniscient Will constitutes what we are accustomed to call the Laws of Nature. It is for Science to study those Laws, investigating and recording the agencies and modes of development employed by Nature, that is to say, by the Supreme Will, in the accomplishment of an all-wise and ever-progressive system of designs. This is one of the noblest purposes for which the faculties of observation and thought have been vouchsafed to us, and it would be ungrateful and irreverent not to hold their revelations in high esteem and veneration. Would it not indeed show a deficient appreciation of the sublime spiritual nature attributed by Christ to the Supreme Being, if we were to neglect the direct mementos of perennial Will inscribed in the course of untold ages on the crust of our Globe, and to prefer the account of the Creation given in the legendary style of Genesis, and transmitted to us through the uncertain channel of human manipulations?*

It may perhaps be said that, after all, the unscientific passages of the Old Testament are few and comparatively unimportant, and that it is, for instance, not a very serious matter if an uncultivated working-class congregation takes the six days of Creation in a literal sense, or believes that fossil remains are proofs of the Deluge. But it is not for uncultured congregations that religious tenets must be chiefly devised. Among the more influential of the well-to-do portions of the community, and even among those slow-going middle-classes which have hitherto found a kind of lazy comfort in keeping

* St. Anthony when asked how he could live without books, replied—"that for him the whole creation was a book always at hand, in which he could read God's word whenever he pleased."—"Sketches of Church History," ch. xiii. p. 66.

their eyes shut in matters of faith, ignorance and routine are on the wane, the tide of knowledge is irresistible, and it would redound more to the secular advantage as well as to the credit of a Church which proclaims the "worship of God in Spirit and in Truth," to take the lead of progress, rather than to denounce as heretical, new facts brought to light by intellectual development, as were denounced of old those of the Copernican system. Facts are stubborn things, and it is self-damaging to anathematize them till they have grown too strong, and then to discover that an easy change in the interpretation of the Hebrew Text, makes them perfectly orthodox.

On the other hand, it is neither dignified nor useful to throw *advanced* Science to those who cannot, and will not take it in. The best plan consists in developing among the people by means of well-selected *elementary* Science, a spirit of practical common-sense, which will be perfectly at one with the true tenets of Christian doctrine.

SECTION 6.—MIRACLES AND PROPHECIES.

This subject is closely allied to the preceding.

Miracles involve temporary suspensions or alterations of those natural laws, which scientists are mostly agreed to consider as immutable. Now we can imagine the Divine Power which ordained these laws, interfering with them for adequate motives, and we can even conceive in certain cases the power of performing miracles being delegated to worthy proxies. But in discussing the *probability* of any such occurrence, it is essential to compare the *magnitude* of the interference, with the *importance* of the result effected. Above all, it behoves us to consider the nature of that result. If it is obviously at variance with the character of good-will towards all men attributed to Providence by the teaching

of Christ, we must show ourselves his faithful disciples, by withholding our belief, till we have thoroughly convinced ourselves that there is no possible room for suspecting a mere human tradition. I here allude of course to the miracles of the Old Testament, as for instance the shower of stones on the defeated Amorites, and the standing still of the Sun at the command of Joshua, that he might have time to exterminate his enemies, which are in painful contrast with the miracles of benevolence wrought by our Saviour.*

Prophecies may be classed as Miracles, being the foretelling by Prophets, under Divine inspiration, of future events, which they could not otherwise foresee. The chief importance of those of the Old Testament is derived from their being taken as proofs that it must be considered as inspired. Hence the trouble taken by the opponents of that view, to show that some of them were written after the event, an assumption somewhat strengthened by the unreliable character of the depositaries of the sacred writings.

Prophetic Emblems have been of late years so remarkably multiplied, that it is impossible to ignore them, but it may suffice to say, 1stly, that the belief in them implies a full admission of the inspired character of the Scriptures; and 2ndly, that in indulging in this branch of theological research, one must take heed of becoming too much involved in the doctrine of Predestination. Nothing can occur against the will of Omnipotence, and to announce prophetically that a thing will come to pass, implies that it has the prospective sanction of the Almighty, or in other words, that it is pre-destined.

As searching in the Bible for *Texts* susceptible of

* The plagues inflicted on the Egyptians in consequence of the obduracy of their king, whose heart was "hardened," are a subject so painful to most Bible readers, that it is best to pass over them in silence.

being interpreted as prophetic, has become a favorite theological pastime, it may be well to remind those who indulge in it, that the first condition is to make sure that the thing foretold is in unison with the doctrine of Christ. Much trouble is sometimes taken to collect proofs of that which it would be more reverential to disprove.

SECTION 7.—RECAPITULATION. EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.

A brief recapitulation of this Chapter gives the following results :—The difference between the Religion of Moses and the Religion of Christ, might almost be compared to that between Earth and Heaven, Life and Eternity.

Moses ignored a future existence ; his teaching was addressed to the Israelites only, and bore the impress of a vigorous and unscrupulous mind, seeking to discipline a headstrong people in a barbarous age, when might was right, and men were tyrants or slaves. He trained his followers to a kind of worldly righteousness, depending not so much on prayer and spiritual devotion, as on a rigidly enforced observance of outward forms and blood-stained ceremonies ; not on loving confidence in a Heavenly Father, and charity and good-will towards all men, but on the constant fear of a stern and jealous master, disobedience to whom would entail all the miseries that life can endure, whilst strict obedience would bring a harvest of earthly benefits, and give the right of reducing enemies to bondage, or of putting to the edge of the sword whole nations that stood in the way. In fact his teaching, conveyed in the Pentateuch, and re-echoed in the subsequent portions of the Hebrew Canon, is so directly contrary to that of Christ, that our Clergy, though tied to the use of the Old Testament by

circumstances which we shall have occasion to examine, can only cull lessons of genuine morality from comparatively few passages, and are obliged to instruct us to disregard others, or to act in opposition to them. Thus the sacrifices so strictly enjoined, are abolished; the slavery for which special provision was made, is denounced as hateful; we are taught not to put our foot on the neck of our enemies, still less to believe that we can serve God by pursuing their utter destruction. We are told not to indulge in wine like Noah, nor win fortune by deceit like Jacob, nor to behave as Abraham did towards Hagar, nor to bargain or argue with the Almighty, nor to attempt to read the future in dreams and divinations; not to be righteous for the sake of earthly treasures, but according to the words of Christ, through the love of God, good-will towards our neighbour, and faith in the blessings of a life to come.

There is a kind of moral color-blindness which prevents our seeing the defects of those we love, or the pernicious tendencies of books we hold in reverence.—A German Pastor once assured me that under the constant influence of a devout and earnest orthodoxy, people accept the reading of the Bible in so peculiar a frame of mind, that neither style nor substance are judged by the rules of ordinary literature. It is thus that under the influence of high art, people acquire conventional ideas of what is decorous or indelicate in painting and statuary. But in order to prevent the indelicate passages and immoral examples of the Bible from having effects like those of ordinary books, it would have been desirable to keep it above the ordinary literary level, occupying a place of honor where it would be a privilege to inspect its hallowed pages. Instead of this, it has been multiplied and made common beyond all bounds. Printed in every possible variety of size, type, cover, illustration, and price, it is distributed so indiscriminately as to entail in thousands of cases rough handling, contumely and

derision, and produce fruits the very reverse of those desired.

It is however more particularly as regards School-education, that it is at once derogatory to the reverence due to the Book, and injurious to the children, to mix in the elements of moral instruction, insidious examples of vice, profligacy, cruelty, and iniquities of every description, individual and national, seemingly sanctioned by Divine authority, or condoned by Divine favor. Even among the Jews, who had so many more reasons for upholding the use of the Old Testament than we Christians, it appears to have been the practice to have special editions for the benefit of the young. In Germany, compendiums of Bible History are used in schools up to the time of preparing for confirmation, and yet in England an uncompromising opinion prevails, that the Bible itself is the only true and fitting groundwork of all religious teaching.

CHAPTER III.—THE HEBREW CANON AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

SECTION 1.—JUDAISING CHRISTIANITY.

By what strange confusion of ideas has then the Mosaic Dispensation, represented by the Old Testament, come to be so universally considered as the very foundation of the Christian Faith? The cause is as simple as its results have been regrettable.—Our Saviour whilst tacitly mitigating by the whole tenour of his words and actions, the evil tendencies of the Mosaic writings, and inveighing bitterly against their depositaries and chief advocates, wisely avoided explicitly condemning the defects of the religion in which he had been brought up, and to which the multitudes whom he addressed were blindly devoted. This devotion was shared by the disciples on whom devolved, after his death, the care of instituting a religious organization, for which he had not left any written code of rules; the very record of his utterances being at that time confined to oral reminiscences. Even St. Paul, surnamed the “Apostle of the Gentiles,” was by birth and education a Jew, and his freedom of thought was curbed in by the Jewish, or to use a word commonly applied, the *Judaising* spirit which was rampant at Jerusalem, then the head-quarters of the new faith. The natural consequence was, that though on the one hand, Sunday took the place of the old Sabbath as the Day of Rest, and whilst under the influence of the Gentile converts, the practice of circumcision fell into disuse, and

Christianity became leavened with the theories of the Greek philosophers, yet on the other hand, the Judaisers succeeded in achieving a success of more vital importance, in perpetuating the spiritual authority of the Hebrew Canon. Without showing themselves as conservative as the sect of the Ebionites, who actually continued to observe the precepts and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, and kept both the Sabbath and the Sunday, the majority contented themselves with adhering to the Mosaic Ordinances, merely as far as suited their purpose, but as an article of faith, they maintained implicitly the divine authority of the Sacred Book.

It is infinitely to be regretted that at that juncture of such vast importance for the welfare of the world, a clear distinction was not made between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, or in other words, that the Old Testament was not treated with the enlightened spirit of discrimination and progress which Christ himself had initiated in his actions, and foreshadowed in his discourses. Everything in the Hebrew Text calculated to promote admiration for the power, and love for the beneficence of an Almighty Father, should have been upheld with pious reverence for the common benefit of all men. The antique records of the Jewish race should have been preserved by its members with patriotic care, always however distinguishing in their proper light, deeds of wisdom, generosity or true valour, and acts of craft or cruelty.—As for the legends of prehistoric ages, they should have been respectfully kept veiled in the interesting haze of their native mystery. It would have sufficed to assume that Moses was inspired, not to divulge to the world the secrets of Creation, but to collect and place on record the traditions current in his time concerning the origin of the Hebrew Race.—Instead of all this, the very Apostles of our Lord appear to have shut their eyes to the Light which they were intended to diffuse. In lieu of bringing it to bear on the pages of

Scripture, in order to raise into brighter relief their divine points, and to condemn authoritatively their human ones, they trusted implicitly to the Sacred Books as edited by a Priesthood, whom especially after the late events, there was every reason to mistrust, and who had only too palpable a cause for upholding the infallibility of the Mosaic Dispensation, since to it they owed their corporate existence and their transcendent power. And thus the Hebrew Canon, to which no New Testament had as yet been added, became the Bible of the Christians. It was upheld with the same mysterious reverence as before, and considered as written under Divine inspiration, that is to say, as the revealed word of God.

Time might have brought improvement, especially when the converts to Christianity from the Gentiles, became greatly superior in numbers to those of Jewish origin. But we shall see by and by, that the Old Testament was rendered indispensable to the New Faith, by the adoption of the Dogma of Atonement, based on the occurrences in the Garden of Eden described in the third chapter of Genesis. Thus the New Church was pledged to attribute to the Bible a character of infallibility, which became the more firmly established when it was found to afford a means of enhancing its secular as well as its spiritual advantages. —When Luther, in attacking the abuses which thus arose, denounced the monopoly of the Scriptures which the Clergy had not unwisely maintained, and lifted from them the veil of Latinity, Protestants gloated over the conquered prize, and eagerly imbibed the whole contents of the Bible, without properly distinguishing the relative value of the two Testaments. By degrees, however, freedom of use engendered freedom of comment, and within this progressive century, the light thrown on the early parts of the Old Testament by the exegesis of authoritative commentators, has raised doubts as to their

Divine origin, and brought about a diversity of opinions which may be summarised as follows:—

SECTION 2.—INSPIRATION. THE PENTATEUCH.

At the top of the scale of orthodoxy, are those who uphold the doctrine of Inspiration in its full extent, believing every word of the canonical Scriptures to have been divinely dictated, and therefore “that its author from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation is God, and none other.” (The Bible Student’s Handbook, p. 4.) They go further, and say that if not the whole, no part of the Bible can be accepted with any certainty as God’s word, since the sifting of the true from the spurious would be impossible. There can be no compromise in the matter.

The theory of Inspiration carried to its full extent is also known as “the doctrine of Revelation,” because it assumes that things are thus revealed to mankind which would otherwise remain unknown. Nevertheless even in works decidedly orthodox, considerable elasticity is given to the sense of the word “Inspiration.” Thus it is conceded that in many instances, allowance must be made for the influence of the personal ignorance, leanings or aversions of the several writers, and that the divine interference need not be supposed to extend to minute details.

Descending a step further, we find that the Penny Cyclopædia, published about fifty years ago, whilst it acknowledges that from the time of Joshua downwards the Pentateuch was received as the divinely inspired composition of Moses, qualifies that affirmation by stating that the information given on a variety of subjects, including Natural History, is such as might be expected from a man “liberally educated at the Egyptian Court,” and avers at the same time that a number of

passages besides that concerning the death of Moses, which must of course be ascribed to a different author, may simply be considered as interpolations, inserted by a copyist with a view to make the author's meaning clearer. Moreover "that in some parts of his narratives, Moses appears to have made use of previously existing documents, especially at the beginning of the Book of Genesis."

It is chiefly since Bishop Colenso's attacks on the authenticity of certain parts of the Pentateuch, and especially of certain numerical paradoxes, that commentators have ventured to think more freely, and to speak more openly concerning the infallible nature of the Old Testament in general, and of that most important part of it in particular. Thus we see no less an authority than the Revd. Robertson Smith affirming in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that the Pentateuch may be considered as a fusion of several narratives, partly covering the same ground, and combined into unity by a person acting as Editor.

I need not take any account of those divines, who playing fast and loose with inspiration, use it to stamp with spiritual authority the passages which suit their argument, but attach no weight to other passages which are against their purpose.—As for the suggestion that the Mosaic Dispensation was not intended to be permanent and final, but merely preparatory, having been ordained by God for the provisional guidance of a people not yet ripe for the dispensation of Christ, I must say that I cannot see any such preparatory character in a code of laws of which the tendency was anything but calculated to facilitate the mission of Christ. Nor can I see a stepping-stone to real Christianity in the empty ritualism of a sacerdotal regime, of which the hypocritical supporters incurred the well-merited anathemas of our Saviour, and met them by hatred implacable unto death.—It would be difficult to imagine a combination

more antipathetic to the pure and practical sentiments of Christ, than that presented by selfish, epicurean, and withal sceptical Priests, stern conductors of heart-hardening sacrifices, by Scribes, whose propounding of the Law had degenerated into pedantic casuistry and a wrangling about mere nothings, benefiting neither mind nor heart, and by Pharisees who ostentatiously carried out those empty principles in ritualistic minutiae and barren formalism.

Allusion has already been made to the practice among the Lawgivers of ancient nations, of representing their ordinances as emanating from a divine origin, or sanctioned by a divine authority. I cannot indeed help wondering that we have never heard the idea expressed, that Moses resorted to a similar expedient, wisely adding to the ascendant thus gained over the minds of the Israelites, the prestige of a glowing account of the legendary origin of their race. Considering the great amount of legislative authority which Moses would thus usefully acquire, he could hardly be blamed for such an expedient.

Perhaps, however, the idea most likely to conciliate conflicting views, would be the one above mentioned which I once took the liberty of submitting to a learned Doctor of Divinity; viz., whether it might not be perfectly allowable to assume that Moses was simply charged by God with collecting and reducing to writing the legends and traditions current in his time about the Creation of the World, and the origin of the Hebrew Race; whether in fact there was any passage of Scripture that could be quoted against such an assumption. He was not aware of any, and I conclude that there is no harm in entertaining this amicable solution of a controversy, which has wrought much unnecessary mischief.

SECTION 3.—THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF GENESIS.

Having considered the theory of Inspiration in relation to the Pentateuch in general, let us accompany a sincere and earnest Christian student in his endeavours to analyse, under the assumption of Divine authorship, those chapters of the Book of Genesis which have acquired such special importance in connexion with the Dogma of Atonement. We will suppose him to have been brought up in orthodox principles, but to be ready to set aside any artificial convictions which cannot stand examination by the pure light of common sense issuing from the Divine doctrine of our Saviour, full of grace and truth.

The solemn Biblical account of the Creation would be so supremely interesting, taken as a venerable relic of pre-historic times, and as one of the earliest specimens of pious poetry, that our student cannot help feeling how sad it is to deprive it of these advantages, by submitting it to the most trying of all ordeals, that of comparison with the works of the one Divine Author, whose every touch is perfection. One could easily excuse a certain amount of confusion in the sequence of ideas of a primæval rhapsodist, but what is a student to think on reading in an account supposed to be inspired, that Light was separated from Darkness on the 1st day, and that vegetation flourished on the 3rd day, though the Sun, whose presence or absence is to us light and darkness, and to whose beneficent influence vegetation owes its existence, was not created till the 4th day ; the Stars being appended at the end of the sentence as if they were merely a host of twinklers !

It is not generally known that there are two accounts of the Creation of Man, differing considerably from each other in substance, and what is more, differing in the name given to the Almighty, which is in the one

Elohim, and in the other Jehovah Elohim.* Now it is impossible to suppose that both accounts were dictated to Moses by Divine inspiration; but on the other hand, if one were inspired and the other not, the inferiority of the latter in every respect would be obvious, so that our student sees no other issue than to conclude that both are legendary traditions, rather awkwardly threaded together by the author or authors of the Pentateuch.†

Incongruities of detail, as well as of general management, baffle every attempt to reconcile orthodoxy with common-sense. One is sorely puzzled to find a purpose for imposing on Adam, who had not yet eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, the interminable task of giving names to thousands of living creatures. The words *oriental tale* echo in the student's brain when he reads of the rib taken from Adam during his sleep, in order to supply materials for a companion, and he can hardly help smiling at the characteristic love of lucre exhibited in the Jewish tradition concerning the River Pison, "which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good."—In short he is continually asking himself, "Is all this compatible with the idea of Inspiration?" "Am I reading the self-evident word of God addressed to all nations and all ages, or does the Book of Genesis consist of the sayings of venerable oriental sages, learned in their generation, teaching the people of their time the history of the known, and the legends of the unknown, but nowise possessing those exalted conceptions of the Spirit of the Universe, introduced by Christ, and confirmed by modern science?"

All previous dilemmas are however insignificant com-

* The second account, in which "Lord God" is substituted for "God," begins at verse 4 of chap. ii.

† Although the chief commentators, including Smith ("Dict. of the Bible," p. 671), seem to coincide as to the plurality of documents used in the compilation of Genesis, they do not agree as to the probable number, which the learned Rabbi Astruc places as high as twelve.

pared with that by which the mind of the student is troubled in scanning the particulars of our first parents' transgression, and of its disastrous consequences. Of course he must not for a moment assume that all that came to pass was pre-arranged, or in other words, a matter of predestination. Yet what other alternative remains, but the almost equally impossible one of supposing, that though Adam and Eve had been created after God's own image, and were the objects of His special care and choicest favours, yet nevertheless a doubt existed as to their moral worth, and that the Tree of Knowledge was accordingly used as a test of their obedience, and that to render the experiment more conclusive, Satan, the arch-tempter, was allowed to try his deceit on the new-born mind of Eve. Lastly, is it to be supposed that the disappointment and annoyance occasioned by her easy compliance, and that of her husband, in a transgression highly provoking and ungrateful, and yet perhaps betraying more weakness than wickedness, called for the fearful sentence of perennial wrath, which condemned not only them, but their progeny for untold generations, to drudgery, disease and death!

The student cannot help seeing in these incidents a profane mixture of the human with the Divine, decidedly in keeping with the attributes ascribed to Jehovah in various parts of the Pentateuch; but decidedly in opposition to those of the Heavenly Father, the supreme essence of all perfection, whom Christ has taught us to glorify in truth and equity, benevolence and forgiveness.—Fortunately the true "Light of Life" is fast dispelling the ignorant misconceptions of a narrow-minded piety; it is no longer forbidden to admire in the narrative of Genesis an excellent moral lesson, decked with the attractions of oriental imagery, and we may safely follow the authoritative example of the eminent modern Rabbi, Astruc, who in his compendium of Jewish History, considers it as "un charmant apologue."

CHAPTER IV.—THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

SECTION 1.—LEADING PRINCIPLES.

THE Dispensation of Moses was specially adapted in very trying times and under very peculiar circumstances, to the wants of the small nation of which he was the leader; it included with certain moral precepts the whole machinery of a powerful and impressive sacerdotal regime, and a complete code of laws for a people that had none.—The Dispensation of Christ was universal; it taught all sorts and conditions of men to shape their course by the light of religion and common-sense, and far from interfering with worldly legislation, it did not even distinctly trace the outlines of any new religious creed or ecclesiastical organization. The improvement of existing institutions might be inferred from, but was not prescribed by, our Saviour's discourses. Thus he showed that dogmatic theology and ceremonial observances were secondary matters, as compared with establishing a secure foundation of simple, clear and unimpeachable truths.

One of the first acts of his holy ministry was to proclaim by his memorable discourse at the well in Samaria, the existence of a spiritual God; thus abrogating the Mosaic conception of a Deity after human likeness, whose jealous wrath visited the sins of the fathers upon whole generations of their unhappy children. For this personal God to be worshipped only by one people in one place, Christ substituted a universal spirit of fatherly beneficence, who could be

adored everywhere, who preferred pious prayers to propitiatory offerings, and to whom expiatory sacrifices were less acceptable than the yearnings of a contrite heart. Worshipping in *Spirit*, men should keep themselves in constant intercourse with their Heavenly Father, and worshipping in *Truth*, they should actually and unceasingly carry out the practical duties of life, which that intercourse would keep constantly before their minds.

This was illustrated by that brief but impressive orison composed by Christ with pious phrases in use among the Jews, and which under the name of "The Lord's Prayer," has become a bond of union among Christians. It shows that all sorts and conditions of men, however lowly may be their position on earth, are welcome to enter into direct spiritual communion with their Father in Heaven; that is to say, not in the realistic Heaven of the Pentateuch, situated above the blue vault of the firmament, and from which the Lord descended to commune with Abraham and Moses, but the spiritual Heaven in the unseen world. This prayer at the same time shows that we should prepare ourselves for asking the benefits of his loving mercy, by being kind and forgiving to those who trespass against us. No opportunity was indeed neglected by our Saviour for convincing his hearers that kindness is the secret of happiness.—It is interesting to observe how much the precepts which he was sometimes able to borrow from the Hebrew Law, gained in vigour and significance through such adoption. We read in Deuteronomy,—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," but was love compatible with the Mosaic attributes of the Deity? Christ, on the contrary, made the love of a Heavenly Father easy and natural. The Law further commanded every man,—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” but in reading the context we perceive that the love of one's neighbour was qualified by the

general understanding that that neighbour was a fellow Israelite ; whereas the touching introduction in our Saviour's well-known parable of a Samaritan to perform the duties and acquire the rights of a neighbour (Luke x. 30), broke down the barrier of prejudice where it was strongest, and was equivalent to admitting all mankind, without distinction of nationality or creed, to have neighbourly claims on our sympathy in distress, and on our good-will at all times.

Most races manifest in the early stages of their religious development, dismal misconceptions of the Deity, unconsciously grounded on human tendencies. Fear reigns supreme. Supplications are addressed in trembling to a stern Master, and his wrath can only be appeased by offerings of blood.—The case of the Jews was peculiar. On the one hand the covenant with Abraham was supposed to secure an exceptional share of divine favor, but on the other hand, the sombre shadows of the Mosaic Dispensation were sedulously maintained by an interested clergy. A dark cloud of superstitious terrorism shrouded the grand conception of Monotheism, till our Saviour dispelled that darkness with the pure radiance of the Light of Life, and revealed to the world the true relations between God and Man,—Beneficence and Love.

It is yet reserved for future generations to understand why antagonistic *evil* is mixed with *good* in the vast scheme of universal purposes ; but in the meantime, there is immense importance, and a happy promise of progressive improvement, in the great truth made manifest by Christ, that the task for the accomplishment of which man is accountable to his Creator, is to promote well-being, and to counteract harm and suffering. To work in the "vineyard of the Lord," is to strive according to our abilities and our means, to diminish the prevailing amount of vice, foolishness and misery, and to increase the amount of virtue, wisdom and happiness.

“The yoke is easy and the burden is light” to those who work with a willing heart, humble in prosperous success, and upheld in adverse fate by the consoling assurance of divine appreciation.*—Few principles of doctrine appear to have been more carefully inculcated by our Saviour than the simple and practical character of man’s duties, so happily blended heavenward and earthward with love and charity, and in which the hopeful prospect of a future life, far from being ignored, as in the Dispensation of Moses, is taken fully into account as an incontrovertible article of belief.—“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.” No burnt offerings like those of the Mosaic Dispensation, and no mysterious dogmatic equivalents, can replace our devoting ourselves heart and soul to the service of the Lord.

There is scarcely a virtue that cannot be spoiled by exaggeration. We are told with a sad perversion of disinterestedness that we must be virtuous for the love of God, and not with a view to earning Heaven as a recompense. The fact is that virtue always requires so much self-control, and often so much self-sacrifice, that we cannot afford to dispense with any legitimate help, and Christ wisely held out to those who did the will of the Father, the encouraging expectation of entering the Kingdom of Heaven. There was nothing in this derogatory to the purest feeling of love and devotion, as was shown on another occasion by the memorable words:—“Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” As a little child in simplicity of heart strives to deserve a recompense promised by a loving parent, and which it

* I have been told that the worthy Principal of a Training College used to address to his pupils the appropriate quotation from Young’s “Night Thoughts,”—“Do your best, angels can do no more.”

prizes for its own sake, but far more for the sake of the hand that will bestow it, so we are taught by Christ to look forward to eternal life, with that simple-minded affection which cannot distinguish heavenly bliss from divine favor, or conceive the one without the other.—Let us be ever grateful to our Saviour for having made Religion so clear and simple as to be within the compass of every understanding, and let us re-echo the cry of exultation,—“I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!”

SECTION 2.—FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

There is something in the oriental tone which pervades most of the discourses of Christ, that is peculiarly fascinating, provided their symbolism be properly understood, and no attempt be made to interpret literally, expressions which were used figuratively. Every Gospel reader should give his mind a little special training concerning some of these expressions, which embody instruction of paramount value. Thus the utterances of Christ, “I am the Light of the World,” or “The Light of Life,” clearly established the great object of his mission, namely to dispel the prevailing moral darkness by the brightness of Righteousness. Those who rejected it, pronounced their own condemnation; for Sin shuns the Light of Heaven. They “loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil”; those who accepted it, were spiritually born again, leaving the sombre atmosphere of Levitical dominion and formalistic laws, to enter with the open minds and loving hearts of children into the bright realms of practical virtue and eternal hope.—It may be truly said that the “Light of the World” is the light of righteousness, which results from a well-trained conscience, and the light of common-

sense which results from a well-trained intelligence, and the light of knowledge which results from well-trained faculties of the mind, and that the Light of Life is the light of salvation, which showeth the way to unite all these in the service of God.

The very simplicity of the Doctrine of Christ may not have been without some influence in determining a frequent use of strong symbolie language, for inculcating what in itself was not of a sufficiently stirring character to rivet the attention of a sensation-seeking multitude. They would soon be tired of hearing that their welfare simply depended on their worshipping God in truth, and that the actuality of their devotion would be measured by its fruits. It was much more startling and effective to hear our Saviour symbolically assimilate himself with the doctrine of spiritual health and strength, which it was his divine mission to diffuse as the true food of the soul, saying, as he taught in the synagogue in Capernaum,—“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” And again, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”

It appears that among our Lord's humble hearers on this occasion, some were surprised at this language, but generally speaking, as Canon Farrar remarks in his “Life of Christ,” the metaphors which Jesus used had not to an educated Jew, one hundredth part of the strangeness which they have to us. Jewish literature was exceedingly familiar with the symbolism which represented by “eating,” an entire acceptance of, and incorporation with, the truth, and by “bread” a spiritual doctrine.—The analogous use of the terms “flesh and blood” is evidently an enforcement of the same train of argument.

Again, it must be remembered that at that period, the

imagination of the Jews was kept in a constant ferment by Messianic dreams and apocalyptic rhapsodies, and that religious discourses devoid of these stirring elements might have seemed tame, and therefore might have proved unprofitable. This may in some measure account for certain outbursts of poetic imagery relating to an imminent advent of the Kingdom of Heaven, and which caught up with febrile eagerness, have been transmitted to us in a manner calculated to mislead superficial students.*

As an instance of the importance of attaching to the expressions of Christ their real sense, I may mention the word "believe" used in various impressive sentences. It is frequently construed as simply applying to the divine origin of Jesus, whereas an attentive study shows that besides this, is meant an earnest belief in, and acceptance of the divine Word or Doctrine which he brought into the world; a belief not confined to passive acquiescence, but implying a firm and unalterable determination to maintain through life the accomplishment of the moral and practical duties which that doctrine involved. This is shown by the text, "Blessed are they that hear the word of the Lord and *keep it.*"

The Parables and Comparisons which figure so promi-

* It will be seen further on how many causes combine to render unreliable, certain portions of the accounts transmitted to us of the discourses of our Saviour. There is indeed much reason to suppose that the minds of his hearers, full of superstitious expectations, would but too readily magnify, distort, and represent as actual prophecies, what in the original utterances of Christ had a mere allegorical signification. This distortion would naturally increase during the period of at least half a century in which those utterances were only preserved by oral tradition, and thus Christ may have been at last misrepresented as predicting the occurrence within the limits of his generation, of events which did not come to pass.—I may here mention incidentally that whatever may have been the origin and mode of growth of the expectation of an approaching cataclysm, it certainly tended very effectually to promote the development of the early Christian communities. By the time it was dispelled, they were sufficiently consolidated to dispense with it.

nently and so attractively in the discourses of Christ, are another feature of the same judicious employment of allegories. Besides many considerations in common with the above-mentioned forms of figurative language, they suggest one peculiar to themselves. How much might the sermons of the present time gain in interest and effectiveness, if our preachers, following the example of our Saviour, set aside, except on special occasions, the practice of scrutinising Bible-texts in order to extract from them some new sense, or hidden particle of truth, or for the purpose of displaying an erudition which a common congregation is incompetent to appreciate, and made Parables of any required length out of the incidents of daily life, spinning out of these materials the heart-compassing tissue of popular homilies !

SECTION 3.—THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

It is of course important that reformers who wish to use the original doctrine of Christ as a test for detecting, and a means for remedying the errors of the Christian Church, should acquire a special knowledge of the Essential Elements of that doctrine, by a review of the four Gospels, carefully undertaken for that purpose, with minds neither biassed by educational routine, nor warped by too concentrated a study of isolated texts. They will thus become thoroughly impressed with the divine principles, admirably simple and clear, designed to regenerate mankind ; principles embracing all peoples and all times, and calculated alike to promote social improvement and individual happiness. They will by the same process become competent to distinguish, and to separate from the true records of our Saviour's universal doctrine, many passages of a Jewish bearing and significaney, not a few of them strongly colored by the Messianic aspirations with which the atmosphere was so

extraordinarily pregnant at that troubled time. They may further remark that in the latter portions of his ministry, the war he had to wage against the Pharisees, often caused arguments of justification or attack to take the place of those general principles of righteousness and love, which were previously inculcated on attentive multitudes of simple-minded Galileans.—It is obvious that before attempting to distil for *present* use from the records of Christ's teaching the pure essence of the Light of Life, it is necessary to eliminate all passages thus stamped with a local or temporary bias, and in addition to these, to set reverently aside all those sentences of an abnormal and perplexing character, of which the frequent presence is but too fully accounted for by the peculiar difficulties under which the acts and sayings of our Saviour have been transmitted to us.

The orthodox belief is indeed that the records of our Saviour contained in the four Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, were directly inspired, and their very discrepancies are adduced by certain divines as proofs of this.* It would perhaps be more correct to say, that where the discrepancies of the Gospel narratives, obviously arising from human transmission, are of a merely incidental and extrinsic character, they need not materially interfere with our acceptance of passages which clearly and intrinsically convey the genuine principles of our Lord's divine doctrine.

Of late years Biblical researches have materially elucidated the circumstances under which the four Gospels had their origin. It appears to be generally agreed that the dates at which they received their standard Greek form were considerably later than hitherto supposed. The Revd. H. R. Haweis, of St.

* It is contended that uninspired authors would "have striven to adapt their histories the one to the other." (*Bible Student's Handbook*, p. 101.)

James's, Marylebone, has affirmed in one of his "Evenings for the People" (Feb. 1883), that as late as 70 A.D. (the siege of Jerusalem by Titus), no connected narrative had been set down, because people were expecting the end of the world, and preferred oral to written accounts. St. Mark's date was about 70 to 75; St. Matthew, 88 to 90; St. Luke, 90 to 94; St. John, or Recollections of St. John (put into good Greek at Ephesus), 120 to 180. Thus according to the Revd. gentleman, the Gospels had before they reached their present form, or anything like it, passed through a long period of oral tradition, and more than one written account.*

The Revd. Robertson Smith in his article on the Bible already quoted, says:—"All the earliest external evidence points to the conclusion that the Synoptical Gospels are non-apostolic digests of spoken and written apostolic tradition."

It is but fair to mention that the oral traditions of those days must not be judged of by our modern ideas. Men of experience, gifted with a retentive memory, made it their special profession to learn and to deliver orally, narratives like that of our Lord's deeds and sayings. It is however obvious, that this mode of transmission repeated for many years, was at the best far from per-

* The following are the above dates in a tabular form with some of the less recent chronological conjectures.

—	<i>Haweis</i> (1883).	<i>Smith's</i> <i>Dictionary</i> (1863).	<i>Chambers's</i> <i>Encyclopædia</i> (1882).	<i>Bible Student's</i> <i>Handbook.</i>
	A.D.	A.D.	A.D.	A.D.
Matthew	88-90	50-60	60-70	38-42
Mark .	70-75	63-70	60-70	65
Luke .	90-94	58-60	60-70	63
John .	120-180	78	120-170	87

fect. Nor were narratives committed to writing thereby rendered secure. We have the Revd. Robertson Smith's authority, and not his alone, for the fact that in those times, when only manuscript literature existed, expensive and scarce, there was no law of copyright. If a man copied a book, it was his to add and modify as he pleased, and he was not in the least bound to distinguish the old from the new.—Somewhat characteristic of the way in which the Gospels were altered and re-altered to suit the contending views of sects, each of which thought itself orthodox, is afforded by a passage in "The Bible Student's Handbook" (Ward & Lock, London), a very useful introduction to the study of the Holy Scriptures, from which it appears that it is not decided whether the Gospel of St. Matthew was originally written in Greek, or translated into that language from the Syro-Chaldaic, which prevailed among the Jews at the time of our Saviour, but that if a translation, it was generally preferred to the original, which had been "corrupted and mutilated by the Ebionites, a sect of Jewish Christians, in order to support their own heretical tenets." This of course implies that the translator had full license to correct according to his own views.

In order to have an adequate idea of the temptations to which both the professors of oral tradition and the authors of written accounts were exposed, and of the extent to which their discretion was too frequently overcome, we must remember the state of social and political disorganization which prevailed at the time of our Saviour, and of which the climax was marked by the siege and fall of Jerusalem. Such a condition of things may somewhat account for the animosity with which the various interpretations of his mission were upheld by conflicting sects, which would little hesitate to tamper with a manuscript for the purpose of putting down a heretical enemy. Thus Judaising Christians would do their utmost to bring the doctrine

of Christ into connection with that of Moses, just as Gnostic Christians would seek to interweave it with their mystic theories.

SECTION 4.—DEFICIENCIES AND IMPERFECTIONS.

It results from the facts and opinions thus briefly summarised, that we must esteem ourselves fortunate in finding the *gist* and *import* of our Saviour's doctrine clearly and unmistakably established by the concurrent testimony of the Four Gospels. It is not too much to say that general unanimity would prevail as to the nature of that import, among any number of unbiassed students devoutly compassing in their minds the general character of our Saviour's oral teaching, and combining it with the equally instructive tenour of his holy life. The intimate appreciation of fundamental principles which may be thus obtained, is of value paramount, and this mental training should *precede* the selecting and committing to memory of a certain number of representative texts. There are also a few moral precepts, such as those in praise of peace-making, humility and other social virtues, which should similarly be learnt by heart; but by far the best way to obtain a detailed and methodical code of moral duties, is to *frame it by logical deduction from the main doctrinal principles*.

We may fairly assume that duties to parents, relatives, friends, superiors, inferiors, and so on, were frequently inculcated by Jesus on his hearers, but that whether addressed to his select apostles, or to assembled crowds, they were less likely to be retained by the memory, incorporated in oral tradition, and ultimately recorded by the Evangelists, than the more sensational utterances

relating to the divine origin of his doctrine, and its importance for salvation.*

One cannot help wishing that the four canonical Gospels were less duplicative of each other, so that they might include incidents of our Saviour's life now omitted, or in other words, a larger portion of those instructive treasures to which St. John alludes (xxi. 25), saying in oriental style, that "if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."—At all events it is probable, that if the reverend Fathers in œcumenical council assembled, who condemned and caused to be destroyed as entirely false and apocryphal, the many more or less spurious Gospels then existing, had tolerated their existence for the sake of such truths as might be in them, fragments of information might thus have been preserved, for want of which certain passages of the true Gospels are scarcely intelligible.

An attentive examination of the reported utterances of our Lord, shows that in many instances they are fragments caught up here and there, and of which for want of the light that would have been reflected on them by the intervening portions of the discourse, it is unsafe to attempt determining the precise bearings. To this element of uncertainty must be added the ambiguities arising from our inability to appreciate idiomatic phrases, and to comprehend popular allusions, though they might be perfectly intelligible to those to whom the discourses of our Saviour were addressed. Thus the expression "Son of Man," so often applied to himself by Jesus, may be misleading to a modern reader, though perfectly intelligible to the Jews, accustomed to hearing it applied to the Messiah in their popular prophecies.

* Assertions of spiritual authority would particularly suit the purpose of writers engaged in establishing the influence of the new faith, and the preponderance of sentences of this description is especially noticeable in the Gospel of St. John.

In studying the Gospels for practical purposes, it is, as a rule, expedient to confine one's attention to those portions of the Text which unmistakably chime in with the fundamental tenour of our Saviour's doctrine.* There is altogether more risk of confusion than hope of profit, in the investigation of dubious and obscure passages, and when they are so worded that they cannot possibly be accepted as conveying the true meaning of Christ, it would be far more judicious on the part of our divines, to set them respectfully aside, than to render them more conspicuous by a lame defence.†

I trust it will be ere long generally admitted that the best way to glorify our Saviour, is humbly to acknowledge that the records of his holy words which we possess, show here and there signs, much to be regretted but little to be surprised at, of human manipulation. Great prudence must be exercised in attempting to correct these imperfections, but they should be carefully eschewed by the Gospel Student who sincerely aims at the elucidation of the doctrine of Christ. He should only accept and treasure up as thoroughly genuine, that which unmistakably breathes those divine principles of Righteousness and Charity, Honour to God, and Happiness to Mankind, which appeal alike to the enlightened convictions of the Christian, and to the reasoning faculties of the Philosopher.

* This precaution would be still more necessary in an analysis extended to the Acts and the Epistles, which exhibit the developments of the new faith, no longer controlled by its Author, branching out under a variety of local and personal influences.

† The following are examples of the kind of sentences in question:—"Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 22). . . . If any man "hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26).

CHAPTER V.—CHRISTIAN DOGMAS.

SECTION 1.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

AMONG the multitudes that flocked around our Saviour, thousands would have become his faithful followers, if he had promised them that their souls would be lifted to Heaven by some spiritual miracle ; but the faint-hearted and indolent shrank from accepting his doctrine, when they found that it required them to achieve their own salvation, by constantly doing the will of the Father in earnest devotion and self-denial, and serving Him by serving their fellow-men all the days of their lives.—When Christ had departed, leaving no authoritative digest of instructions, nor for a time aught beyond oral traditions, it happened as might be expected from human nature, that the possessors of those traditions, partly perhaps in a spirit of kindness, but partly also in a sense of self-importance, or carried away by an injudicious fervour of devotion, forgot the practical bias which formed so inseparable a part of their Master's teaching, and were induced to give increased weight to their narratives, by attaching to the mere *belief* in them, an intrinsic efficacy fraught with salvation. It was natural that such an idea should at once gain favor, and as it was equally natural that belief should be meritorious in proportion as the things to be believed were wonderful, one cannot feel surprised at a growing prevalence of the marvellous and supernatural. We have seen that for a time, men's minds were mainly absorbed by the sensational expectation of the coming of

the Kingdom of Heaven before that generation had passed away, an expectation strong enough to exercise a very important influence on the development of the new religion.—More durable was the excitement produced by two Dogmas, to which it is necessary to devote special attention: that of the Holy Trinity, and that of Atonement.

SECTION 2.—THE DOGMA OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

There has been a frequent, perhaps a not unnatural tendency among ancient nations to emphasize distinctively the chief attributes of the Divinity, till they became so many entities or god-heads.* Great however as was the influence acquired by the dreamy philosophers of the Greek School over the development of the nascent religion, the glorious monotheism which distinguished the native Jewish faith of our Saviour and his apostles, from the paganism of the surrounding Gentiles, was too firm to be shaken to that extent by gnostic visionaries, though some of them tried hard at it. If certain circumstances connected with our Lord seemed to favor the trinitarian idea, which has become so inherent a feature of Christianity, no definite injunction settled authoritatively its form from the beginning. A wide field was left for theological speculation, and thus arose a number of distinct sects, each glorifying its own orthodoxy, and cordially deprecating the errors of all the rest. Their divergencies chiefly related to the relative position and attributes of the three members of the Trinity, and to the more or less divine nature of Christ, ranging from the high orthodox standard since stereotyped by the Athanasian Creed,

* These were often grouped in a triadic form, as shown by the Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva of the Indians; the Kneth, Neith and Phtha of the Egyptians; and the Odin, Braga and Freia of the Scandinavians.

down to the level of those Unitarians who only see in Christ a holy Prophet, appointed by God as special representative, and endowed at his baptism with supernatural knowledge and power.—The interval is immense, but viewed from a purely utilitarian standpoint, distinctions of this character have not by any means the amount of influence that might be expected on the concerns of social life. We shall see in the next section that the case is different with the Dogma of Atonement, which merges in some measure the moral benefits of all the active life and teaching of our Saviour, in certain spiritual benefits connected with the one event of his death; and which thus forms one of the greatest difficulties to be contended with, in bringing round the Christianity of the present day to the Christianity of Christ.

SECTION 3.—THE DOGMA OF ATONEMENT.

In order to have some idea of the manner in which a theory so much at variance with the fundamental principles of Christ's doctrine has grown to be commonly looked upon as an indispensable element of the Christian faith, we must again revert to the times and circumstances in which the latter first took root and flourished.

I need not dwell on the change from the lessons of practical morality taught by Christ, to the pious speculations initiated even in the Epistles, and welcomed by popular favor,* or to those indulged in by the fertile imagination of gnostic philosophers. Now it was quite natural that such being the public bias, a mysterious theory which represented the *death* of our Saviour as an inexhaustible fund of Salvation available on easy terms,

* In the Epistles "the mysterious parts of our holy faith are more fully opened and explained than they were by the Lord himself" (Lowth, quoted at p. 111 of the *Bible Student's Handbook*).

should find ready acceptance. It took for starting-point the sin supposed to have been committed by Adam and Eve in eating of the forbidden fruit, whereby not only they, but the whole human race, had become the children of wrath. It assumed that Christ, the second member of the Holy Trinity, had come into the world to suffer death on the cross, and thereby to redeem from perdition the souls of all who might duly acknowledge his divine nature, and might obtain from the ministers of his Church, admission to the benefits of his holy intercession. It was welcomed by men vested with ecclesiastical authority, who became as it were the repositories of that fund of salvation, and it was hailed with equal satisfaction by believers, who thus saw opened to them a new and less laborious road to Heaven. The Gnostics had dreamt to some purpose, and the Judaisers, who had succeeded in maintaining the infallibility of the Hebrew Canon, now had the delight of seeing it firmly linked to the Gospel of Christ by means of the most representative Chapter of the whole Pentateuch. Both parties were elated with the idea that they had glorified Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the World. Whether it was a redemption of this kind that our Saviour alluded to when he proclaimed that he came into the world as the Light of Life, to show men how to worship their Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, and to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven by doing His blessed will,—that question no one seems to have asked. Nor whether, tested by the doctrine of Christ, various passages of the Pentateuch in general, and the narrative of Eden in particular, could be attributed to divine authorship without profaning the attributes of the Almighty. Still less does it seem to have occurred to any one at that time, that the sweeping sentence of suffering and death pronounced at the gates of Eden on our first parents, and on millions of their progeny, had at least this comfort in the minds of Moses and his followers,

that death was a perpetual sleep, an entire cessation of existence, whereas the Christian Church in proclaiming the immortality of the soul, virtually added to the stern Mosaic sentence, an eternity of torture. Nor does any one seem to have thought of asking why Atonement, which meant redemption from the consequences of divine wrath, did not restore life on earth to what it was before the "Fall."

But these and similar considerations are eclipsed by others so painful that I could not find courage to allude to them, save for a hope that to disclose the evil may promote the cure.—Suppose we can sufficiently strain our reasoning faculties to accept as a matter of fact that the parental love of a beneficent Creator for His firstling creatures, could by their foolish disobedience be suddenly converted into ages upon ages of wrath, involving innocent millions upon millions in a fearful doom. By what further mental distortion can we bring ourselves to believe that that wrath was as suddenly pacified by an occurrence a thousand times more likely to kindle it than the first,—by a vindictive and atrocious murder, deliberately perpetrated with odious cruelty on God's beloved Son, the chief criminals being the very priests of His holy temple, and the official guardians of religion and the law? Moreover according to the dogma of the Holy Trinity, would not the idea that the Almighty sent His Son into the world to atone for original sin by the sacrifice of Golgotha, be equivalent to imagining that His anger was appeased by a self-inflicted injury?

Christ was indeed a Redeemer of the world, not by his death alone, but by the whole of his ministry, which that death hallowed, and made fruitful through the sanctity of martyrdom. He made the spiritual light of Heaven shine on the darkness of an age when moral gloom was on the earth, and religious and political power vied with each other in spreading degradation and misery. Nothing could be clearer or more emphatic,

than the way in which he marked out the leading principles of the religion that was wanted. Simple and practical, free alike from dogmatic complications, ostentatious ceremonials, and rigid observances, it led to Heaven by a filial devotion to God's will, that is to say by *Righteousness*, in which lie self-control, furtherance of all good and hindrance of all evil,—*Truth*, in which lie knowledge, improvement and progress,—and *Charity*, in which lies the welfare of mankind.

In briefly alluding to the passages of Scripture said to have a *prophetic* bearing on the dogma of Atonement, I may be allowed to revert to what I said concerning the care and discretion that must be used in admitting prophetic announcements of events, lest these become stamped with predestination, and the perpetrators of the greatest iniquities obtain thereby the excuse of being but the passive agents of the designs of Providence. A chief argument will however consist in the indications supplied, as shown above, by Christ himself of the objects of his mission; indications so clear, precise and emphatic, so often repeated, and so uniformly given by the several Evangelists, that no doubt of their genuineness can be entertained. The incontrovertible arguments they afford against the dogma of Atonement are twofold:—1stly, if our Saviour had come into the world to appease by his sufferings the wrath of the Father, this motive would have been expressed with the same explicit frankness as that of saving the world from darkness by his heavenly Light.* 2ndly, by that very Light, the awful condemnation pronounced against our first parents, and the attendant prophecy, are shown to be utterly at variance with a true appreciation of the Divine Attributes.

* That Christ's enlightening *ministry* was the true means of our salvation, and not his death, is evident from the words reported by St. John (xvii. 4) as pronounced before his martyrdom, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

As regards *Types*,* let us take as leading example the Sacrifices alleged to have been instituted by Moses as foreshadowing the great sacrifice of Golgotha. It is unnecessary to repeat what I have said in a previous section concerning the melancholy absurdity, so prevalent of old, of supposing that the Lord delighted in cruel sacrifices. But the idea of typifying or prophecying, that is to say, of announcing as a predestined and authorized occurrence the event of Golgotha, involves considerations of a deeper cast. We must descend to a low level in the aberrations of semi-barbarous peoples to find carried out to its full extent the principle of measuring the value of sacrifices by the importance of the victims, and consequently of esteeming human sacrifices above all others. We read in Ihne's History of Rome (Vol. V.) that in the year 113 B.C. in order to appease the anger of the gods, manifested in the defeat of five successive armies by the Cimbri and Teutones, the Romans sacrificed, by burying them alive, four human victims, a male and female Greek, and a male and female Gaul.—In the year 97 B.C. a senatus consultum declared human sacrifices illegal.—Compare this humane decree with the institution by the originators of the Christian Church, of a dogma representing the anger of the beneficent Father of all men as satisfied and appeased by a more than human sacrifice, involving peculiarities from which the mind recoils with respectful horror; and imagine Christian priests still refreshing the remembrance of that fearful appeasement, by the symbol of the Holy Communion. Yet such are the hallucinations of which the human mind becomes susceptible when led by the blind zeal of impulsive piety, away from that doctrine which is alone the true "Light of Life."

As for certain sentences which occur in the New

* "A Type is a symbol of something future and distant, or an example prepared and evidently designed by God to prefigure that future thing" (Pinnock's *Analysis of Scripture*).

Testament, especially in the Gospel of St. John, and in the Epistles, and which have been interpreted as allusions to the doctrine of Atonement, they could not under any circumstances be set up in antagonism to the standard utterances of our Saviour. Moreover they lose a great part of their importance through the complex hindrances of those illiterate and troubled times, so entirely different from the stereotyped publicity of events and discourses to which we are accustomed. Many utterances of Christ have self-evidently been ill reported without any ostensible cause. So much the more must we be on our guard, where indiscreet zeal and party bias are likely to have mixed sensational accounts and appreciations of our Lord's ministry, with the true ones; thus gradually perturbing the many streams of oral tradition which flowed in various localities, and under various influences, during the considerable period before the Synoptical Gospels made their appearance. It has been shown that even manuscripts used to be tampered with for sectarian purposes in a very unscrupulous manner by copyists and translators, and it may indeed be assumed that the dogma of Atonement, equally welcome to both clergy and laity, had become so popular as to influence the wording of many passages of the New Testament, long before the latter had received its definitive Greek form. There was abundant time for this, for the earliest copies of the Greek Testament extant, date from the 4th century.

Before setting aside this painful subject, I wish to apply to it that golden rule of results, which Christ instituted when he said "by their fruits ye shall know them." Assuming the benefit of Atonement to be reserved for orthodox believers, we see excluded from salvation all non-christian nations, and all heretical sects, in addition to all individual souls condemned for their own sins, and we thus find the aggregate of the lost fearfully preponderating over that of the saved. It is indeed

impossible to shut our eyes to the fact that this dogma, though it has immensely contributed to the power and wealth of the Church, has notwithstanding all that has been done in the way of proselytising by force of argument and by force of arms, failed to prove a boon to humanity at large, as might have been the propagation of the practical and eminently conciliatory doctrine of Christ.

Then as regards the promotion of peace and concord in the Christian community, it is through the substitution of theoretical for practical piety, and the consequent heretical disputes on various points of dogma, that have arisen at different periods such fearful scenes of relentless persecution and internecine strife — Again, if we seek to measure the success of the dogma of Atonement up to the present time by the moral results achieved, we find the general averages of virtue and vice presented in a long succession of centuries, discouraging in a lamentable degree. The ordained clergy, having in virtue of “Apostolic succession,” become sole dispensers of the benefits of Atonement in the form of Absolution from *Original Sin*, found in due time that they were equally qualified to remit all manner of *venial* sins actually committed, imposing such conditions as they thought fit, either for the moral discipline of the offenders, or for the material advantage of the Church. Another discovery was that the merits of the holy martyrs, and of pious persons canonised as saints, so much transcended the amount of their respective sins, as to leave an available surplus, which was stored up in the spiritual treasury of Heaven, to serve similarly for the remission of sins.

The system having culminated in the sale of Indulgences and other abuses of the Church of Rome, these were suppressed by the Reformation, but the Doctrine of Atonement remained undisturbed, and with certain mystical corollaries is still so identified with our own

religious education, that few devout persons beyond those who have specially compared human theology with the divine doctrine of Christ, have the least notion of any incompatibility between them. Fortunately, the practical result is not so serious as one might be inclined to suppose. Genuine piety delights in following the instinctive suggestions of conscience and common-sense, and is little prone to escape self-sacrifice by seeking benefit from the sufferings of our Saviour on the Cross. I have already said that wherever such real piety prevails, and well-meaning Christians of any denomination are happy in their orthodoxy, it will be the policy of the true Disciples of Christ to refrain from unnecessarily disturbing it; but if encouraged by the progressive spirit of the times, they contemplate earnest measures of progress, especially as regards the religious training of the rising generation, the Dogma of Atonement must have a first claim to their attention.

SECTION 4.—CONCLUSIONS.

In entering on the subject of Religious Reform, I undertook to explain to my friends the comforting convictions to which study and meditation had brought me, concerning the improvement of Christianity through a return to the original Doctrine of Christ. We have found it necessary to examine the manner in which the Judaising propensities of the first members of the Christian Church, interfered with the sublime simplicity of the principles of Truth, Righteousness and Love, proclaimed by our Saviour. Contrarily to his express injunction, they put the new wine into old bottles, or in other words, they grafted the promising young shoots of the new faith, on the old stock of the Hebrew Canon. A brief investigation has painfully convinced us of its unfitness to receive them, but we have had the comfort

of seeing a comparison with the Mosaic Dispensation, bring out in bright relief that of Christ.

We have further had the satisfaction of finding that notwithstanding the irregular and incomplete manner in which the discourses of our Lord have been recorded, we see nevertheless clearly represented in their general tenour, and confirmed by the whole aspect of his ministry, the fundamental principles of his divine doctrine; principles from which may be logically deduced all that we require for our spiritual and moral guidance.

Passing to the complex dogmatic additions made to the simple and practical teaching of our Saviour, we have seen that though the Dogma of the Holy Trinity has constantly been, even as to minute details, a source of dissidence and strife, it is a subject on which, as well as in reference to the miracles connected with it, different opinions may be entertained without much difference of practical results; provided there be a devout appreciation of the divine character of our Lord's doctrine.

The case is different with the Dogma of Atonement, evidently a Judaising conception, forming a bond of union between the Mosaic and the Christian Dispensations. It casts on the bright "Light of Life," one of the darkest shadows of the Pentateuch, the principle of innocence suffering for guilt. Strength of conscience may guard pious believers against its dangerous tendencies, but it rests on principles incompatible with those taught by our Saviour, and it should be openly or tacitly renounced by all who aspire to regenerate Christendom by his holy doctrine, and who have the courage to proclaim themselves "*Disciples of Christ.*" Such a renunciation need not outwardly involve so much change as might be imagined. Most of the present terms used in speaking of our Lord, such as "Saviour," "Redeemer," and the like, would be retainable in a more rational sense, for he

came to save and redeem the world from the dark degradation of sin, by enlightening mankind as to the true attributes of the Almighty Father, by establishing for heavenward guidance the holy doctrine of truth, righteousness and charity, and by cementing it with the blood of martyrdom.

In order to feel convinced that the word "Redemption" thus acquires a meaning more legitimate and rational, it suffices to ask oneself:—Which is the best way to honor Christ? Is it to assume that the main purpose and value of his mission was not in his ministry, but in his cruel death, which was predestined to atone for the comparatively small offence of our first parents, and thus after 4,000 years to arrest the fearful doom of perdition inflicted on their innocent progeny, by a God of Wrath;—or is it to adore not in trembling, but in filial love, a God of Mercies, and gratefully to acknowledge the true redemption of mankind, through that Holy Doctrine, that Divine Wisdom (λόγος) of which our Saviour so emphatically proclaimed himself the personification, when he said "I am the Light of the World"?

It may be urged that the dogma of Atonement has already been denounced more than once as a reflex of semi-barbarous times, but always ineffectually. The fact is that these denunciations have mostly lost their weight through having been made by sceptical philosophers, who carried away by their animosity against human sophistications of religion, have involved in their aggressions religion itself. It would be a new spectacle, and one calculated to obtain the sympathy of the pious and intelligent of all Christian communities, to see the "Disciples of Christ" carry out reform under his own guidance. Lenient as regards comparatively innocuous aberrations, they would be firm where moral principles are involved, and their disinterestedness would give them a right to be uncompromising where the wisdom of mammon has been substituted for the wisdom of

righteousness. Unobtrusive and unostentatious, they would chiefly seek to make proselytes by that conclusive logic,—the example of their happiness. Mindful of the words of Christ,—“by their fruits ye shall know them,” they would organize on the secure foundation of his holy doctrine, a system of moral and social discipline, adaptable to all the conditions and vicissitudes of Daily Life. Thus guided, they would unceasingly strive to disseminate happiness among all around them, and would reap the blessings of contentment and hope.

PART III.

Organization.

CHAPTER I.—ASSOCIATION OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.*

SECTION 1.—LEADING FEATURES.

SHOULD the friends of progress in the various Christian Denominations, encouraged by the spirit of the times, adopt for their guidance in their respective spheres of improvement, that enlightened original doctrine of Christ which neither philosophers can impugn, nor churchmen disavow, they will proceed to organize on that secure foundation, a System of Spiritual, Moral and Social Discipline, adaptable as far as possible, to all the conditions and vicissitudes of Daily Life.

That System will find its written expression in a carefully prepared Programme, adaptable by its cosmopolitan and conciliatory character, to the aspirations of nearly all Christian Churches, Denominations and Sects. Each of these will have its more or less autonomic organization of Friends of Religious Progress, and the leading principles of the common Programme will unite the several organizations as so many branches of a general Association, under the name of "Disciples of Christ," or any other title found more suitable.

* This Association must not be confounded with the "Christian Alliance." (p. 9.)

Persons wishing to join the Association as MEMBERS, will make known to the constituted authorities of their Branch, that desire, implying adhesion to the leading principles, though not necessarily to every detail of the Programme.

Persons desirous of co-operating in the charitable, educational or other useful work of the Association, without adopting its more advanced principles, but simply pledging themselves to treat them without prejudice, may join it as ASSOCIATES.

I originally intended to suggest for the Members of the proposed Association, the title of THEODULIANS, and it was only through fear of its conveying the idea of a monastic order, that I was led to the title of "Disciples of Christ." Either term has its appropriateness; the one indicating a reform based on the original doctrine of Christ, the other showing that reform to be characterised by a practical devotion to the Will of God. The term "Theodulians" might perhaps conveniently serve to bind together Members of the "Universal Alliance of the Servants of God," separated in Creed, but united in moral discipline and aspirations. Thus besides Theodulian Christians, there might be Theodulian Theists, Jews, Mahometans, Hindoos, and so on.

SECTION 2.—TENETS.

It has been shown that for Reformers who wish to bring Christianity as near as is now possible to the lines originally traced out for it by our Lord's doctrine, it is a first duty thoroughly to imbibe its fundamental principles through a conscientious study of the four Gospel narratives, specially undertaken for that purpose, with minds as free as possible from the bias of pre-conceived notions. Guided by natural judgment and common-sense, they will select those teachings, so simple and so expansive, embracing all nations and all times, in which our Saviour inculcated

Truth, Righteousness and Charity, filial love to our Heavenly Father, and fraternal kindness to all men. They will easily distinguish from these holy teachings, many sentences, the offspring of circumstance, which were specially addressed to Jewish multitudes brought to extremely abnormal conditions by Mosaic institutions, political misfortunes and Messianic dreams. Such sentences must be reverently set aside as not answering to the requirements of the present age, and with them all passages of an ambiguous or paradoxical character, or susceptible of perverse interpretation.*

The essential elements of the spiritual and moral Doctrine of Christ, thus made plainly manifest by eliminating all that is commonly allowed to veil their clear perception, and further brought into relief by an attentive consideration of the general tenour of our Saviour's life and ministry, should be devoutly considered *from the standpoint of the present times*. Thus will be produced by a plastic process of pious meditation, the practical tenets of a reformed Programme.—Principles of Faith like those proposed for a "Universal Alliance" of the Servants of God (see p. 7), would come first, as establishing relations of rational tolerance and good-will among the various peoples of the Earth, irrespective of Creed.—Next would come a series of leading tenets marking somewhat, like those given at page 9, closer bonds of amity and mutual improvement, designed to unite the members of a Christian Alliance.—Thus far the path would be smooth, only such innovations being contemplated as might gradually flow from a conciliatory intercourse of the Christian communities. But we have seen that in endeavouring to restore Christianity to its original conception, it is impossible to avoid altogether interfering with orthodoxy. Fortunately however, we have also

* The value of useful sentences is of course not affected by verbal or chronological discrepancies in the Gospel narratives.

seen that having once clearly defined the standard principles of the Doctrine of Christ, we may safely proceed to use them as a test for accepting what is divine, and rejecting what is human.

At the same time it will be in accordance with the enlightened spirit of our Saviour's teaching, to disarm as far as possible by freedom of opinion, the virulence of controversy in matters of dogma, and it will be expedient to leave uninterfered with, whatever is rather of theoretical than of practical bearing. A careful scrutiny will show that some of the most prominent causes of religious divergence, lose much of their importance when considered in reference to their moral results for communities or individuals. Accordingly, great liberty of opinion may safely be allowed as regards the constitution and functions of the Heavenly Powers recognized in the various Christian Creeds, the belief in miracles, and the mysteries of our future life, though as a general rule, it is best to avoid indulging unnecessarily in topics of this description.

A more serious case is presented by the Dogma of Atonement, which the Disciples of Christ will for reasons both practical and theoretical be fully justified in omitting from their tenets:—1stly. It has been shown that, directly or indirectly, this dogma has been for ages conducive to abuse of clerical power, and to laxity of morals among the laity. 2ndly. The incident of Eden on which it is founded, has been recognized by modern critics to be of a legendary and allegorical character. 3rdly, and this is still more important, the notions it conveys respecting Jehovah are entirely at variance with those inculcated by Christ respecting our Heavenly Father, the Essence of Equity, and the God of Mercies. 4thly. Much more honor is done to our Lord by considering the titles of "Saviour" and "Redeemer," as due to him for having rescued mankind from superstitious degradation, by diffusing the light of truth, righteousness

and love, rather than for having endured torture at the hands of wicked men, to atone for the disobedience of our first parents in Eden. 5thly. It is indeed utterly derogatory to the idea of a divine origin to regard the crucifixion of the Messiah as merely an equivalent atonement or compensation, for the foolish transgression of such infinitely subordinate beings, as the clay-born progenitors of the human race. 6thly. Christ himself has clearly said that they shall inherit the kingdom of Heaven, who do the will of the Father which is in Heaven.—Each man striving to do his best should, without spirit of calculation, curiosity or pride, enjoy lovingly the certainty of divine appreciation, even as a simple child enjoys beforehand with affectionate delight, the thought of receiving a token of satisfaction from a loving parent.

SECTION 3.—RITES AND SERVICES.

It is clear that whilst most of the present Rites of the several Christian Churches might be retained, some would require a modified interpretation.

Baptism and *Confirmation* might be considered as tokens of admission to the bosom of the Church, without connecting them dogmatically with Salvation.

The *Holy Communion*, leaving aside its present dogmatic sense, would remain an appropriate fulfilment of the words of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke xxii. 19.)

Repentance should, time and circumstances permitting, be stamped with positive and practical proof, in order to deserve *Remission* of *Sin*.—*Absolution*, no longer based on divine Atonement, would only convey soothing words of hope.

Confession might safely become a useful institution, if reduced to the voluntary outpour of troubled consciences

seeking advice from a revered pastor, the enlightened father of his flock, and the discreet family peace-maker.

The Day of Rest.

THE SABBATH, originally a boon of hebdomadal rest obtained by Moses from the King of Egypt for the benefit of his oppressed countrymen,* became through his associating it with his mystical account of the Creation, a religious ordinance, a test and an instrument of priestly supremacy, stamped with the stern severity attributed throughout to Jehovah by the relentless leader of a warlike race.

When Christ substituted the God of Mercies for the God of Wrath, he redeemed the Lord's Day by his memorable words, "The Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath," and we are accordingly at liberty to give it for social and ecclesiastical purposes, any complexion endeared to us by custom, or which circumstances may render appropriate, provided it be in all cases made a practical blessing, giving rest to those who have toiled throughout the week, exercise to the sedentary, fresh air to those pent up, and recreation to those who otherwise have none, as well as spiritual comfort and guidance for every one according to his needs.

Parables.

It is obviously desirable that the Disciples of Christ in the various countries, should if sufficiently numerous, have special Church Services, Liturgies, Missals, and the like, being however mostly adaptations of their habitual ones. There are localities where novelty finds

* See article on the Sabbath in Sunday Review (Jan. 1884), based on the Talmud.

favor, but generally speaking, it is safer to take advantage of the pious regard which in religious matters attaches to long usage, and not to innovate, save where a practical and utilitarian purpose is clearly in view.

Such would decidedly be the case in adopting the use of PARABLES, which were so important a feature in the ministry of our Lord. The Clergy might as before mentioned, imitate this practice with unquestionable advantage, substituting for erudite analyses of Bible Texts, lessons of Practical Morality clothed in the attractive garb of simple narratives and comparisons. On these they would be free to dilate with impressive eloquence, always carefully adapting it to the average requirements of their congregations. They would review in succession the moral features of daily life, taking advantage of any occurrences which might serve to add a zest of *à propos* to their discourse, and frequently introducing one important ingredient of which our Saviour's Parables had not the benefit, namely, incidents from the lives of the most usefully virtuous, and most amiably great among the believers in his holy doctrine up to the present time.

Scripture Lessons.

One of the most difficult questions in reference to the Protestant Rituals, is the constant use of Lessons from the Old Testament in the vernacular tongue. It is obvious from what has been said that these must be either omitted from the special Liturgies of the Disciples of Christ, or very carefully revised, so as not to retain anything derogatory to the reverence due to the attributes of the Supreme Being, or any examples of objectionable conduct.*

* Similar caution should be enjoined to Scripture Readers, who should moreover be supplied with a variety of religious and moral books calculated to unite entertainment with instruction.

As regards the New Testament, it has been shown that only practised students can safely read it without explanatory annotations, and that few chapters are suited for being incorporated without comment in a church service, though on the contrary, certain representative passages are admirably calculated to form the themes of one or more sermons. Such are for instance the sentences in which the love of God is so emphatically confirmed, and the love of our neighbour so practically explained. Then we have seen what a world of sense is contained in the words pronounced at the Well of Samaria, and with which Christ may be said to have inaugurated his ministry, namely "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The first sentence, taken in earnest, disposes of all tendencies to connect the conception of a universal Spirit with human attributes, to say nothing of human imperfections. It separates at once the personal Jehovah of the Pentateuch from the spiritual God of Christians, and loosens the charmed tie unhappily established at the dawn of Christianity, and hitherto thoughtlessly maintained, between our Saviour's mission and the events of Eden.

"To worship in Spirit" is to worship in Prayer.—This is a subject of such transcendent importance that a special Chapter will be allotted to it.

"To worship in Truth" in the full sense conveyed by the repeated injunctions of our Saviour, we must not only be truthful in our prayers, but also in the actuality of our endeavours to do the will of God; in other words we must not only keep ourselves in constant intercourse with our Heavenly Father, but really and unceasingly carry out the practical duties of life, which that intercourse will bring constantly before our minds.—This is Practical or Applied Religion, a few remarks concerning which are reserved for a special Chapter, under the title of "*Moral Duties.*"

CHAPTER II.—PRAYER.

SECTION 1.—GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

“To worship in Spirit” is to worship in Prayer,—in that communion of the mind with the Creator which through meditation unravels the Divine Will, through thanksgiving vivifies the enjoyment of favors received, and through supplication raises a hope of favors to come.

Prayer is the very essence of Religion. It organizes the action of the Conscience, rendering its influence constant and practical when circumstances are normal, and affording comfort and guidance in difficult ones.

To facilitate Prayer, and render it more solemn and earnest, is a main purpose of outward pomp and ceremonial. There are indeed persons whose minds are easily concentrated on pious thought, and some who even prefer the most unadorned and quiet surroundings; but for the greater number there is in the majesty of a sacred edifice, and in the harmonizing impressions of a service judiciously conducted in accordance with the tastes and habits of the congregation, something that greatly tends to rouse apathetic consciences, and to induce a devotional frame of mind. It is for the expert preacher to strew the proper seed on the ground thus prepared.

Even solitary Prayer mostly requires fitting aid of some kind in setting aside worldly pre-occupations, in gathering together pious feelings, and in preparation for good resolves. Hence the devices adopted in some branches of the Christian Church, for appealing to the senses in a variety of ways. Habit may make them

useful reminders and aids to devotion ; but care must be taken lest either the use of these outward tokens, or a multiplication of sentences, imperfectly understood or thoughtlessly repeated, be reckoned as an equivalent of actual prayer.

Christ himself has taught us by the example of the Lord's Prayer, to adore our Heavenly Father in direct communion ; nevertheless the practice so prevalent in the Roman and Eastern Churches of addressing prayers to the Holy Virgin and to the Saints, is not seriously to be found fault with, provided only *intercession* be asked for, and not any direct interference with the supreme administration of natural events.

In framing Liturgies for the use of the Disciples of Christ, great care should be taken to avoid in Professions of Faith, whatever might give unnecessary offence to orthodox friends. An example relating to the attributes of the Almighty may serve to illustrate my meaning :—

“ God is the supreme mind of the Universe. His existence is eternal, His power infinite, and His creative wisdom is made manifest to us by the facts and laws of Nature.”

Now it is important that the ideas of power and wisdom, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, should always be enhanced by a devout sense of their union with all spiritual and moral perfections, and by a special recognition of that divine benevolence proclaimed by our Saviour to mankind at large. Occasional opportunities should be taken of reminding the faithful how essential it is to avoid, except in poetic flights of devotional imagery, any assimilation of divine to human proceedings, especially any tendency to represent the Supreme Being as stooping to human imperfections, patronising deceit or cruelty, punishing the innocent for the guilty, or delighting in blood-stained sacrifices. But in inculcating these and other similar precepts, it is not necessary to say anything about the Old Testament, and

especially the Pentateuch, being so much at variance with them.—Similarly the Dogma of Atonement may be silently refuted by simply upholding the emphatic declarations of Christ himself, concerning the object of his mission. Impersonating the divine λόγος, Word, or Doctrine, he came to redeem mankind from the darkness of ignorance, sin and misery, making clearly manifest as “Light of the World,” how to enjoy its blessings contentedly and usefully, and as “Light of Life,” brightly illumining the way to heaven.*

SECTION 2.—PRIVATE PRAYER.

However elevating and instructive may be the Sunday service, its congregational Prayer, and its pulpit oratory, there is generally between these incentives to good and holy conduct, and that conduct itself, something wanting which may realise the emotions of the heart, and turn to account the wisdom of the understanding. This is effected by those private and individual prayers, which are the language of the conscience, and the yearnings of the soul, and which should be systematized, and never neglected without potent necessity. To hold this humble communion with the Almighty Father of all Righteousness, is to worship Him in Spirit, and in order that we may also worship Him in Truth, every thought, word and aspiration, must be perfectly genuine. We must be constantly asking ourselves not only,—“Am I praying for a good and proper thing?” but also,—“Am I doing my best towards the purpose for which I pray?” This thoughtful and conscientious sifting of our desires, and these continual reminders to bestir ourselves to the

* Of the three Creeds used in the Anglican Church, the Apostles' Creed is the one least open to objection. But even this might be omitted from some editions of the proposed revised Liturgy, in order not to avert the good-will of certain denominations, and notably of the Unitarians.

utmost to deserve the aid we ask for, are in themselves an abundantly sufficient motive for the use of Prayer, apart from any benefit resulting from it, either by a direct intervention of Providence, or by a less conspicuous intervention through secondary causes.

Under ordinary circumstances it is desirable to have every morning, independently of any customary Family Prayers, a few minutes at least of private devotion, affording an opportunity of applying the touchstone of conscience to the chief prospective affairs of the day. Every evening, or if that should be engaged, at any other convenient time, ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, or more according to circumstances, should be similarly devoted to solitary meditation, pious and practical, compassing not only a conscientious review of the proceedings of the day, of affairs in hand and prospects entertained, but also a reminder of duties and an expression of kind wishes owed to nearest relatives and friends, and an appropriate thought for superiors and inferiors. A brief miscellaneous orison might be framed to serve as a standard conclusion.*

It may be assumed that the same private prayer will be used on Sunday mornings as on week-days, but if favored by meditative leisure, the private evening devotion of Sunday should be considerably expanded, though maintaining the same utilitarian character. More persons should be mentally called up in succession for the purpose of noting those to whom on any account of affection or sympathy, duty, gratitude or expectation, more than a passing thought is due. Even the names

* The following may afford suggestive indications :—“Grant, O Lord, that my thoughts, words and deeds may be in accordance with duty and good sense, and that I may not be misguided by any worldly propensity or weakness, or thoughtless impulse, or occasion any person any unnecessary pain or displeasure, but that on the contrary, I may be able to render myself agreeable, and even in some degree useful to my fellow-creatures, and particularly to those who are most entitled to my affection or my sympathy.”

of departed relatives and friends may suggest something in honour of their memory: kindness to those dear to them, fulfilment of legitimate desires they were prevented from carrying out, doing what they ought not to have left undone, and remedying, if possible, what they ought not to have done; also rectifying unfavorable impressions concerning them, shown by subsequent events to have been erroneous.—More earnest is the task of scrutinising the facts and failures, joys and sorrows of the past seven days, and the probabilities and aspirations of the seven days to come, by that spiritual light of Christ which unerringly brightens what seeks it, and condemns what shrinks from it.

Whenever a journey is about to be started on, or an undertaking, work, or pleasure of any kind is about to be initiated, it should be a regular practice, provided it can be done without involving inconvenience, or exciting attention, to address heavenward a momentary supplication for favor and aid. Conscience will at once either give its support, or denounce the unworthy prayer, and though its adverse verdict may be put down by one of those excuses which so readily present themselves to those who seek them, the momentary conflict will be called to mind and dwelt upon at the evening prayer, and another time one will be loth to initiate that for which one feels ashamed to invoke the divine blessing.

It will be for parents to train their children in Systematic Prayer, in addition to their ordinary devotions, and it will be for clergymen and missionaries to endeavour to introduce at least an approximation to this system among the poor, developing facilities of every kind for their benefit. They will find that deficient education is a serious impediment to a steady working of mind and conscience in devotional union. The ignorant, easily led by others, are when left to themselves, apt to substitute desultory efforts of impulsive piety for organized improvement, and the care of guiding their good

will to good results, will demand the constant attention of the Clergy, in an expanded, and more intimate intercourse with the people.

For many persons, and especially in the lower social grades, the chief difficulty will be in the many causes which oppose a devotional frame of mind, and a quiet concentration of thought. I hope therefore that the practice prevalent in Catholic countries, of providing the poor with open Churches and Oratories, and which is beginning to be appreciated among us, will receive useful extension. As for the amount of time actually needed, it is, except for the uneducated, far less than might be imagined. A trained mind travels fast, method assists the memory, and practice renders easy a succession of valuable mental glances, each lasting only a few seconds, except when conscience thus roused, calls for an appreciative thought, an earnest resolve, and perhaps for an entry in a note-book, of errors to be rectified, or of duties to be performed. Moreover, self-study thus regularly pursued, soon produces a thorough self-acquaintance, and one knows where the weak points are that require looking after.—Of course a system of this kind to be durably successful, must be elastic, and not only business ties, but pleasure engagements must be consulted; generally however the greater the difficulty in finding time for the control of Prayer, the greater is the need of it.

Conscientious persons accustomed to this kind of spiritual discipline, become so averse to giving up or curtailing their appointed devotions when indisposition renders brain work injurious, that it may be well to remind them that every fatigue of the brain is so much taken from the power to contribute to the happiness of those around.

Confirmed sinners will regard self-testing prayers as something that does not concern them, or prefer to rely on existing spiritual panaceas. Confirmed pleasure-

seekers, and men absorbed with worldly aspirations, will affect to treat lightly an unpalatable device, which would render conscience more irksome to them than it is already, but the thoughtful will at once recognise its value. Even those whose philosophic minds generally turn away from everything of which they cannot actually analyse the *modus operandi*, will, I trust, candidly acknowledge that Systematic Prayer yields very *positive* results. As for earnest Disciples of Christ, who by patient perseverance have succeeded in working out this plan to practical success, they would not relinquish it on any account. Their yoke will truly be made easy, and their burden light by the spiritual support always vouchsafed to those who show their love of God by doing His holy will, and in times of trouble they will be infinitely comforted. The boundless attributes of omniscience and omnipresence bring the divine influence into direct communication with all, who seek it in the pure emotions of earnest and conscientious Prayer, and a refined sense of spiritual perception, constantly makes manifest the soothing presence of a friend.

CHAPTER III.—MORAL DUTIES.

SECTION 1.—GENERAL DUTIES.

It has been explained that though a certain number of moral precepts bearing on the Duties of Daily Life, occur here and there in the Gospel Narratives, it not only would be futile, but might be misleading, to attempt to collect a comprehensive and methodical series of them. It is far more profitable to have recourse to the fundamental principles of the divine teaching, and to derive from them by common-sense deduction, the elements of spiritual and moral discipline required for the guidance of the Disciples of Christ.—The following fragmentary suggestions, partly summarising the conclusions arrived at in previous pages, may serve to show the spirit in which I conceive that the work should be undertaken.—*

The noble task of Man on earth, the tribute of love which he owes to his Creator, is to combat and to conquer the elements of evil, which for reasons yet unrevealed, form part of the universal scheme of antagonistic forces. Pre-eminent among the Compound Agencies of Nature, his purpose is one of improvement, development, and progress.

* For general purposes, an authoritative digest of "Social and Moral Duties" carefully compiled, without dogmatic or sectarian tendencies, arranged to meet various requirements of Civilized Life, and explained as well as rendered interesting by numerous examples borrowed from truth or fiction, might render unquestionable service. Apart from this comprehensive work for the use of the general public, special educational series should be prepared, constantly upholding the fact too often lost sight of, that Morality is Practical Religion. Primers and Readers would progress from the Infant School upwards; and in the higher grades of culture, Moral Philosophy and Ethics might become prominent features of academic and especially of clerical curricula.

We should strive to diminish the prevailing amount of vice, foolishness and misery, and to increase the amount of virtue, wisdom and happiness, extending compassion and kindness even to the brute creation. We should work with a willing heart, humble in prosperous success, and upheld in adverse fate by the consoling assurance of divine appreciation.

The Disciples of Christ will be specially expected to devote themselves, according to their means and abilities, to the well-being and happiness of their fellow-creatures, duly considering the claims of duty and affection, and constantly governed by truthfulness, honesty, equity, earnestness, perseverance, and humility. The systematic and practical character of their religion, which will bring its influence to bear on all the concerns of Daily Life, will train their minds to that valuable faculty of quickly and correctly summing up knowledge, experience, forethought, and moral sentiment, which faculty is *Common Sense*. *Self-control* will second its decisions, and secure results worthy of being offered in grateful tribute to their Divine Master.

Numerous as are the abnormal influences which in our complex civilization disturb the simple habits, even of the lowest social levels, interfering with the earnings of the industrious workman, and with the judicious disposal of those earnings by a frugal housewife, yet there are features in the life of the poor from which their wealthier neighbours might borrow a useful example; particularly a sympathetic desire to comfort and assist one another.

It is too often forgotten that power, wealth and knowledge have their respective duties, and every privilege its proportionate obligations.*

It must also be remembered that persons in exalted position will be called to account, not only for the evil

* Luke xii. 48.

they have done, and for any evil example they may have set, but also for the good they have neglected to do.

Wealth should be considered as a trust to be conscientiously administered, and involving among other duties, a thoughtful and discriminating liberality towards relatives, friends, and dependants. Adhesion to this principle will not only alleviate painful inequalities of condition among the members of a family, but in an extended sphere, it will do more to counteract the ill-effects of ponderous fortunes, and to obviate the antagonism of social grades, than the invidious devices of communism.

SECTION 2.—PRINCIPLES OF EXPENDITURE.*

Every Disciple of Christ is bound to attend with care, method and firmness, to a judicious management of his income. His PRINCIPLES OF EXPENDITURE must be thoughtfully organized according to his means, his position and his duties, and should these allow, he should regularly separate and set aside from his ordinary or current expenditure, a *Benevolent Fund*, available, 1stly, for the assistance of necessitous relatives and friends; 2ndly, for charitable, educational, and other benevolent objects; 3rdly, for purposes of public benefit.†

One of the greatest difficulties to contend with in

* A well-digested, and at the same time popularly written, exposition of PRINCIPLES OF EXPENDITURE, based on Christian duties, common sense and self-control, might be, not perhaps quite a novelty, yet if methodically carried out, a valuable addition to home literature.

There is much usefulness as well as interest, in an analytical study and comparison of the good or evil results likely to be effected in the various channels through which money flows, whether favoring healthy, respectable and eligible occupations, or the reverse. I once thought of proposing to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, a prize for the best essay on this subject, which might be entitled the "Science of Expenditure."

† Joyous events of personal or family importance, might afford additional opportunities of benevolence.

practice, is that protean undefinable influence called Fashion, the great temptation of small minds, and the great hindrance of gentility with small means.—Countries and localities, whether urban or rural, generally have something approaching to normal standards of style, comfort and display, indicated by common consent as appropriate for the several social levels. With a little taste and judgement, and a desire not to be conspicuous, one can be near enough the mark to satisfy oneself without displeasing others. But where Fashion is in the ascendant, new, fanciful, and ever-changing claims assail the purse. The fact is that manufacturing industry can produce, and is of course anxious to produce, especially as regards clothing, furniture and decoration, a great deal more than the actual requirements of a sober population. To producers therefore, Fashion is a signal boon, engendering as it does a craving for new articles before the old ones are worn out. Independently of a constant development of new inventions, often inferior to those they push out of the market, it is from an industrial point of view, a welcome spectacle to see new forms of adornment originated by the leaders of the fashion, and upheld in ephemeral success by its votaries. If the former always had notions of hygiene, and the latter were all persons of abundant means, there would be little to be said. Unfortunately the Laws of Health, and the precepts of financial prudence, are little heeded by the thousands who follow suit in a spirit of foolish rivalry, to say nothing of the spirit of imitation, that extends the mischief from grade to grade, down the social scale. To the growing expenditure for Dress, must be added that for House Decoration and Furniture, and in short for every form of luxury that can be indulged in under the plea of comfort or refinement.

Feminine frivolity has its counterpart in masculine selfishness, which less conspicuous in some directions, makes up by more objectionable ones, such as for

instance what is called *good living*.* One sees pampered *gourmets* reverse the maxim of the philosopher,—“I eat to live, and do not live to eat.” In certain quarters luxury in Food has become so habitual, as to be unnoticed by those who breathe its atmosphere, and on festive occasions, a wasteful accumulation of articles out of season, far-fetched delicacies, and high-priced wines, reminds one painfully of the hungry misery which dwells reproachfully hard by.

As a natural result of luxurious civilization, we hear a general complaint of the increasing difficulty of making ends meet, which means of course anxious thoughts for the welfare of the family circle, and very few thoughts for purposes of benevolence outside. The young men of the period begin to look upon Matrimony as costing more than it is worth, and bachelorships are indefinitely prolonged.

The subject is a vast one, but these few remarks may suffice to show that the Disciples of Christ will be called upon to exercise, as regards themselves, much thoughtful self-control, and as regards others, much tact and forbearance. The general fascination is so strong, that more harm than good is done by inconsiderate remonstrance. The golden rule that advice should always be kindly given, must be remembered even by those who are fully entitled to give it. Most effective will be the great influence of an example of moderation and good taste, clearly proving that one can be cheerful without being *fast*, and prudent without being *slow*.†

* Eagerness to have the best of everything, which as a general principle is so useful an incentive to industrial progress, often misleads to paying exorbitantly for minute differences of quality. Remarkable examples of this occur in choice wines, preposterous prices being paid for shades of excellence, appreciable only to practised connoisseurs.

† Persons who habitually live up to their income, will find after a time that they are living beyond it, on account of the general fall in the rate of interest, and the general rise in the cost of the necessaries of life.

SECTION 3.—ALIMENTARY ECONOMY.

Total Abstinence is a necessary barrier against the abuse of Intoxicating Liquors among those who have not the power of mind to distinguish the limits between moderation and excess, and the power of will never to transgress those limits. An immense effort was necessary for checking the fearful vice of DRUNKENNESS, which has brought down misery on so many thousands, and too much praise cannot be bestowed on the successful exertions of our Total Abstinence Associations, and especially on the achievements of the Blue Ribbon Army. It may be hoped however that if the true discipline of Christ should be established in the land, Common Sense and Self Control may in time suffice for restraining intemperance, without the expedient of a Pledge, so as to allow of deriving from Alcohol a full measure of its benefits, without fear of its dangers.

SMOKING is often associated in a medical point of view with Drinking, which it resembles in the theory of its ascendancy. It would be here out of place to discuss the good or evil effects produced on the system by the use or abuse of Tobacco in various forms, and under various circumstances. Opinions are strongly divided on this subject, and moral duty need only step in authoritatively, where Science and experience have made out a clear condemnation; though in the meantime, prudence demands that we should watch with a suspicious eye, a drug of which the acting principle (Nicotine) is one of the most virulent poisons in existence.

The principles of Hygiene ought to be treasured by all who value their Health. The rules relating to Food in particular, are as interesting as they are useful, but our Saviour's parable of the Sower, is here forcibly exemplified by ordinary students, among whom many a good resolve falls away in the hour of temptation. Not

so with the faithful Disciples of Christ, who feeling how essential Health is to their usefulness, will earnestly bring to bear on the Hygiene of Nutrition, their habitual elements of success,—Common Sense and Self Control.*

Waste shows at all times a deficient appreciation of earthly blessings, and it becomes sinful when unrelieved want is at hand. Improved domestic arrangements respecting those broken victuals of which kind Sisters of Charity have shown the value for the poor, should do away with certain forms of Waste, which are apt to culminate in the mysteries of the *hog-tub*. Children should be taught to consider all that appertains to their daily meals, and Bread in particular, as a boon, of which the practice of saying grace very properly marks the pious appreciation, and it might be well that they should constantly have in view inscriptions, such as the following :—“Waste not, want not.”—“The Lord saith to the poor man, Waste not to-day, that thou mayest not want to-morrow,—and he saith to the rich man, Waste not that others may not want.”—“Honor the goodly produce of the earth, for it is the gift of Heaven.”—“Remember in thy abundance that others are hungry.”†

* It is important for all classes to be aware how often complaints of the stomach are brought on by overloading it, or by swallowing what is insufficiently chewed, or too hot; the rich should bear in mind that a too free use of unwholesome delicacies, or heating spices, prepares a store of gout for future years, or even for future generations.

It is highly satisfactory to note how much the attention of first-rate Hygienists has been bestowed on the alimentary resources of the poor. The applications of Science to the preservation and importation of new Food Resources, have given to these industries a development, which for the middle and lower classes is an inestimable boon, and of which it is desirable to extend a judicious and grateful appreciation.

† I remember seeing lines to the following effect in the dining-room of an eminent philanthropist:—

“May I in moderation fed,
Be never heard to say,
O had I now that crust of bread
Which once I threw away.”

Among the many facts more useful than pleasant to know, which the growing attention paid to Domestic Economy cannot fail to bring into prominence, are the numerous instances of CRUELTY to food-animals, connected with their rearing, their transport and their death. Many members of the Society specially instituted for the prevention of such evils, will be shocked to find that they have unwittingly promoted their perpetration.

SECTION 4.—CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

Though Conscience embraces all Moral Duties, the term "Conscientiousness" may be conveniently attached to a certain group of them. Its sense is two-fold: *positive*, as in the case of the man who conscientiously keeps his promise, requites a benefit, or takes faithful care of whatever is entrusted to his charge; or it is *negative*, as in the case of the man who avoids deceit, abstains from the infliction of hidden harm, and shrinks from offending against the most scrupulous sense of honor. There are indeed in the strange intricacies of civilized life, many points where artificial notions of right and wrong prevail, rendering vague the transition from truth to falsehood, from open-heartedness to dissimulation, and from honesty to deceit, but there are few of these perplexities that cannot be solved by submitting them to that Light of the World, whose rays of transcendent purity show every object in its proper color.

Certain professions seem to claim special license for deviating from the straight line of TRUTHFULNESS. The diplomatist may be inclined to smile at the idea of negotiations ruled simply by equity and philanthropy, and a military commander may be indignant if one attempts to interfere with his privilege to deceive an enemy. A more serious difficulty is presented by numerous branches of the industrial and commercial community, where by degrees artificial

standards of rectitude have become so prevalent that the public is, as it were, acclimatised to tacit acquiescence. For all this I know but one effective remedy, namely the system of Test Prayer previously suggested, which will continually bring the current of transactions within cognisance of the inward conscience. That conscience will gradually acquire increased watchfulness and thoughtfulness, its verdicts will become more strict, the boundary between ingenuity and fraud, fair profits and advantage-taking, will become better defined, and the time will come when the good commercial fame of the Disciples of Christ, will everywhere command credit and respect, whilst their integrity and consequent mutual reliance, may greatly conduce to a full development of the co-operative system in manufactures and agriculture.

SPECULATION, a frequent error of sanguine and impulsive temperaments, becomes imprudent when it involves a risk of seriously affecting family comfort, and culpable when it is carried on with money not one's own ; it is then that it often leads the unhappy victim of golden phantoms, from folly to guilt and despair.*

There is scarcely a vice through which normal ideas of rectitude have been more perverted in the development of a mistaken civilization, than that of GAMBLING. Stock Exchange speculations are but a minor branch of this baneful propensity, which the more urgently demands the attention of the Disciples of Christ, because Christianity, as hitherto constituted, has signally failed to eradicate it. The very Crusaders indulged in it, and

* There would be less of that speculation in public securities, which in some countries has reached such disastrous proportions, if financiers were as scrupulous as was my dear Father, who being in Paris at the time of the allied occupation, was told by his French Professor, occasionally employed by Wellington, that a document was being prepared, which would cause a very considerable rise in the French funds. My Father asked if this was a secret ; " perfectly secret," was the answer, and my Father's reply was that he would not avail himself of intelligence thus divulged, for enriching himself at the expense of less favored fund-holders.

at the present time public conscience has become so accustomed to it, that scarcely any social class is above yielding, in one form or another, to its fascinations. This is in an extraordinary degree the case in that network of fashionable mischief called the Turf, through which a praiseworthy interest in the rearing of noble animals, long the pride of our pastures, has become an all-absorbing vortex of giddy gaiety, reckless extravagance, wild excitement, unscrupulous knavery, mad speculation and ruined homes.

Another prospect is rather less dismal. The most noted Gambling Hells of the Continent have, with a flagrant exception, been closed, and the celebrated German Spas have proved the feasibility of maintaining their attractiveness without *roulette* or *rouge et noir*; but the intensity of the spirit which has thus been obliged to content itself with less public excitement, may be judged of by the fact that gambling debts, not being recognised by law, are regarded as *debts of honor*, and take the precedence of all others. Thus the poor tradesman whose family depends for subsistence on the good faith of his customers, is allowed to manage as he can, rather than that one fashionable gamester should keep another waiting for a conventional due.

It is not easy to emerge from this contaminated atmosphere. By rule of right, one should not accept any money that is not either the valued gift of a friend, or the legitimate payment for a service rendered, but it would be a valuable compromise to establish by rule of fashion, that one half of all monies changing hands through gambling of any kind, should be set aside for charitable purposes.

The inducement of *Chance* often assumes other more perplexing forms, in which the transition from rectitude to laxity, from harmlessness to mischief, is too vague to admit of being marked by a hard and fast line. Thus no one objects on moral grounds to securities of which

the bonds are from time to time called in by lot, and paid off at par; but there is something questionable in the loans with dazzling prizes attached, which in some countries take undisguisedly the name of "Lottery Loans"; and as for the regular State Lotteries of ill-starred renown, there is no question as to their well-deserving condemnation.* Then re-ascending, we rise through various forms of Tombola and Bazaar Lotteries for benevolent purposes, to the harmless raffling for a picture, or the still more innocent subscribing to an Art Union.—All this proves the value of a practical religion which will bring methodically and unceasingly to bear on the concerns of Daily Life, the administrative influence of Common Sense, and the executive regime of Self Control.

SECTION 5.—KINDNESS.

Politeness, which persons of morose temper or unpolished manners, affect to despise as interestedness or servility, is when genuine, far from either. It manifests in a manner determined outwardly by local custom, an inward desire to be agreeable, backed by a readiness to be useful. By small attentions it creates kind feeling, and promotes that general good-will which St. John was in his old age continually recommending to young Christianity, with the words,—“Little children, love one another.”

The germs of family dissension often lie in a neglect of that constant kindness and considerateness of tone and manner, which betoken inclination to oblige, and unwillingness to offend. Some families seem thoroughly permeated with these sentiments; in others the casual overhearer of an ordinary conversation would expect a quarrel. Its members seem to think,—“We all know

* It appears that the sum swallowed by the Italian Lottery in the period from 1863 to 1883, amounted to nearly 55 Millions of Pounds sterling.

very well that we love each other; why should we take any trouble to show it?"—The fact is that real love delights, not only in restraining every impulsive word that might occasion the least friction, but also in keeping as it were, all contacts well lubricated with tiny drops of the oil of affection.*—Married people in particular should strive to make themselves throughout life as amiable as they were in courtship.—Each Disciple of Christ should try to behave to relatives and friends, as after losing them, he might wish he had behaved to them.—Good Domestic Servants perform dutifully the services for which they are hired; but if you wish them to have really at heart your welfare and interest, and those of your family, you must show yourself kindly inclined to reciprocate.

Many a dispute arising from difference of opinion, might be toned down, if the contending parties could be made to understand that the object of their discussion, like objects in Nature, may present totally different appearances when seen from different standpoints. This particularly occurs with persons whom sectarian intolerance, ignorant isolation, or international prejudice and distrust, keep far from each other, and far from the central overlooking position of enlightenment and peace, which is the standpoint of our Lord. Thither it will be the duty of his true disciples to attract the wayward stragglers of his flock, carefully studying, and intelligently counteracting their several causes of misconception and ill-will.

Quarrelsome people affect to be such lovers of the

* There are asperities of character, natural or acquired, that are best cured by rubbing down; but the case is different with persons of affectionate and sensitive temperament, who are pained by anything however slight, that betokens a want of reciprocity on the part of those they love. They should strive to subdue any excess of this tendency irksome to their family and friends; but these, wisely kind, will not attempt to cure it by not heeding it, for they would only irritate a nervous system already too excitable.

truth, that a sense of duty compels them to say what comes into their mind, be it palatable or not to those whom they address. This is one of those perversions of a good principle to an evil purpose, which are the more dangerous for the mask they wear.* There is scarcely a good principle of behaviour which cannot through exaggeration become a defect, and instances of this are sufficiently frequent to exercise the discriminating study of the Moralist. For instance dignity of manner demanded by exalted authority or representative position, and per contra, haughtiness of demeanour or pride of wealth; judicious economy and parsimony or avarice; firmness and stubbornness; humility and weakness; and so on.

Reproof is most successful when it is obviously not the effect of impulse, nor marked with ill-humour or tinged with irony, but is felt, especially among the members of a family, to be unmistakably the language of sincere and judicious affection. Account should as far as possible be taken of differences of temperament. Expressions that would be only too quickly forgotten by some, would kindle in others a lively resentment, and by others again be taken sorely to heart in silent pain. This particularly applies to sarcastic remarks, which should be very cautiously indulged in.

Small suspicions, such as frequently occur respecting subordinates, should neither be acted upon impulsively, nor kept in to grow and rankle. One must give the suspected offender an opportunity of clearing away an undeserved suspicion, or of alleviating and toning down a real offence.

Our comments on the conduct of others would often be more charitable if we knew its real causes, which

* There is much truth in the French proverb,—“*Toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire,*” and not less in a saying of my Father,—“They who do whatever they think right, will often do what others think wrong.”

when we cannot ascertain, we should endeavour to divine. Nevertheless it is necessary in order to check the evil tendencies of society, not to condone too lightly, offences which only a wholesome dread of public opinion can keep in due restraint.

The safety of the community requires Penal Laws, but their enforcement should unite as far as possible with the prevention of crime, the improvement of criminals. Justice should be even-handed, that is to say, not governed by caprice, prejudice, or favor, but at the same time account should be duly taken of aggravating or extenuating circumstances, as far as it is given to mortal judges to scrutinize the aberrations of a sinner's mind.*

SECTION 6.—BENEVOLENT ECONOMY.

Indiscriminate Alms have engendered so much imposture, as to disgust many a kindly disposed person, and to furnish an excuse for others less charitably inclined.

To secure the full value of charitable relief, a painstaking investigation of the several cases is required. But when the intermediary of charitable organization societies, or the like, is resorted to, it is well to make sure that the working expenses do not absorb too great a per-centage, that a kindly and intelligent spirit pervades the staff, and that the value of the gifts is not lowered by the unfeeling tone of an official distributor.—A much more sympathetic distribution can be expected from Lady District Visitors, whose

* Independently of the clouded intellect, which in uneducated persons often deadens the conscience, and renders less clear the distinction between right and wrong, there prevails a general ignorance of the law, due to its extreme intricacy. A compendious digest of the Penal Statutes for popular use, would be one of the excellent results of their codification, a task which I am told has actually been effected by one of our most eminent jurists, nothing preventing its sanction by Parliament, but the usual impediments to improvement.

organization in every parish is an essential duty of the Clergy of all denominations.*

Great praise is due to the Christian spirit which has in this country, perhaps more than in any other, accomplished a vast amount of social and charitable improvement, through intelligent co-operation added to wealthy support. Voluntary work done with regularity and earnestness on the Councils, Boards of Management or Committees of the various Provident and Benevolent Institutions, is an excellent employment for persons having abilities and leisure to dispose of. They should not neglect to enhance the value of their services, by a careful study of the books and reports recording the experience acquired in the United Kingdom and abroad, in the respective branches of CHARITABLE ECONOMY.†

* The devotion to the poor of certain religious sisterhoods is not only beyond praise, but has even been known to go beyond discretion. I have been told that among the *Petites Sœurs des Pauvres*, at Bruxelles, the exertions are so excessive, and the food so indifferent, consisting of remnants left by the poor whom they feed with the remnants of the rich, that they do not live long, and that they themselves and their friends, actually rejoice when signs of an incurable decline set in.—Admirable as is this martyrdom of charity, one cannot help feeling that it defeats its own object, by destroying in the bud the fruit of future years. Cases of exaggerated piety more or less similar in their melancholy results, are too frequently the outcome of blighted hopes, but the eminently practical doctrine of Christ, teaches us that lives which for ourselves seem not worth living, should be lived usefully, and if possible cheerfully, for the sake of others.

† Among the endlessly varied Institutions here referred to, I may mention, as particularly deserving of study, with a view to improved organization, the following types:—Industrial colonies including farms, dairies, fisheries, and similar undertakings, on the co-operative principle; self-supporting Reformatories and Penitentiaries; self-supporting Unions and the like; provident Dispensaries and Hospitals of every description; Savings' Banks; Benefit and Insurance Societies; Charitable Societies; Clothing and Needle-work Societies; and generally all societies worked by voluntary exertions for benevolent purposes.—Two books of the following description would be desiderata, if not already in existence:—A Treatise on Practical Benevolence as a text-book for earnest workers, and a Manual of Provident and Benevolent Institutions.

When industrial capital is fructified by the toil of many hands, the wealth accruing to its possessor, may in the eyes of the world be considered as fully paid for by the risk to which that capital is subjected; but the religion of Christ sees in the companionship of exertions, when cemented by good conduct, a claim to companionship of results, a moral right to some participation in good fortune, as there would be heavy participation in the disaster of a failure. That right, better secured by reciprocal good-will than by pugnacious organizations, may be met by principles of co-operation, or by pledges of assistance in accident or disease, and of comfort in old age. When such precautions fail in securing mutual good-will, and unfortunate misunderstandings arise, let employers and employed vie with each other in submission to a soundly established system of arbitration, remembering that Christ said,—“Blessed are the Peacemakers!”

By these various means a durable solidarity may gradually take the place of an estrangement equally prejudicial to the interests of both parties, and an effective safeguard may be established against the war of classes, socialism and communism.

CHAPTER IV.—SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ECONOMY.

SECTION 1.—LOCAL AND NATIONAL DUTIES.

IN a country governed to a great extent by authorities of a more or less voluntary character, it is very essential that capable and conscientious men should come to the front, in order that public affairs may not fall into less worthy hands. Disinterested principles, conciliatory demeanour, regularity and assiduity, supported by special studies, are particularly desirable in Boards connected with Local Self Government, Education, and the Guardianship of the Poor.

Able-minded ambition should be encouraged, when it has for its aim the attainment of good objects by honest means, and esteems power and popularity simply in proportion to the useful leverage they afford.

Political intrigues and all participation in polemical bitterness should be avoided. The conciliatory spirit with which the Disciples of Christ would approach religious difficulties should also guide them in social and political ones. Advocating Measures rather than Men, they should conscientiously promote what they consider conducive to public good, without becoming the blind supporters of distinguished talent, or the tools of a party. No one should indulge in the presumption of imagining that he understands all possible sides of a question. Making due allowance for circumstances of which one has no personal experience, one should avoid sweeping opinions and declarations that admit of

no compromise, remembering that policies strictly correct in theory, must sometimes be flexible in practice.

SECTION 2.—INTERNATIONAL DUTIES.

The same principles of Equity and mutual Good-will which should regulate the reciprocal behaviour of individual men, ought also to govern international relations. Such principles will never fail to secure to a people that strives to maintain them through prosperous and adverse fortune, an honorable place in history.

Nations should rejoice in the prosperity of their neighbours, seeing in it not only an incentive to honorable emulation, but also a source of mutual benefit.

A people made prosperous by a well-ordered administration, is welcome to be proud of it, but must not lightly deprecate all other forms of government. The success or failure of national institutions depends on so many intricacies of inward temperament and outward circumstance, that the result in one country, does not prove what it would be in another.

More durable than the alliances of diplomacy, founded on casual interests, or jealous theories of "Balance of Power," will be the alliances of Peoples animated by a desire to become leaders of peaceful progress and universal prosperity.

The destinies of Nations have for so many ages been influenced by a preponderance of Might over Right, that numerous instances occur of communities in a state of dependence, of which the sudden subversion would be injurious. Wherever this is the case, it should be remembered that with nations as with individuals, power has its obligations, and every privilege its corresponding duties. Political guardianship should be so exercised as to be obviously a mutual advantage.—This principle of

mutual advantage should particularly prevail in the relations of Colonies to the Mother-country, and ought to perpetuate their union.

Among the best political devices of modern times, are Neutral States, which interposed between powerful ones, present an impediment to collision.—Another, is the system of Arbitration proposed as a substitute for War, and which if it became a recognized institution, might lead to the establishment of an International Areopagus. Nothing could be more calculated to promote such a result, than a reconstruction of Christianity according to the principles of Christ.

SECTION 3.—ALLEVIATION OF THE HORRORS OF WAR.

Painful as are some portions of the annals of Christianity, it is satisfactory to notice that on various occasions, Christian sentiments have mitigated the horrors of war.* All honor is due to the Convention of the Red Cross, originated by Henri Dunant of Geneva, soon after the battle of Solferino, and under the protection of which the wounded are attended to on the battlefield, in comparative safety. To promote works of benevolence like this, will obviously be an essential duty of the Disciples of Christ.†

A subject here presents itself which deserves the earnest attention of those who in all humility aspire to walk in the footsteps of our Lord in the relief of human

* e.g. The "Trêve de Dieu" of the middle ages.

† War is such an unbridling of the worst impulses, and tends so much to pervert the moral intellect, that any rational endeavour to institute "Laws of War" is deserving of encouragement. I may mention as much needing interference, but at the same time requiring accurate knowledge of facts, much tact in discussing them, and considerable influence in high quarters for attaining to practical results, the following three subjects:—Reprisals, Wars of civilized against uncivilized nations, and Suppression of Rebellions.

suffering. Modern Science has revealed to us certain admirable anæsthetics, or deadeners of pain, an intelligent use of which renders a patient unconscious under the most severe surgical operations ; also means by which the tortures, even of soldiers lying fearfully wounded on the battle-field, can for a time be allayed in a degree almost miraculous. But that alleviation is only a passing bliss, and hopeless agonies return to be terminated only by a lingering death. To put a prompt end to them in an almost painless moment of comparative composure and resignation, with a thought for home and a thought for heaven,—is not this in every way conformable to the principles of wise compassion taught us by our Saviour in the name of the God of Mercies ?

CHAPTER V.—EDUCATIONAL DUTIES.

SECTION 1.—RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

WE have seen that where people are contented and peaceful, acting practically right though on principles theoretically wrong, their convictions need not be disturbed, and they may be invited without adopting the tenets of the Disciples of Christ, to co-operate as Associates in works of Christian benevolence. Some of them may insist on moulding the education of their children on the pattern of their own, but many may be brought gradually to see better chances of a happy and useful life, in religious and secular educational lines such as the following :—

An essential feature of the reformed creed, and one which should show itself in the earliest stages of religious instruction, is that it does not represent the religion taught by Moses, but that taught by Christ himself. Consequently the first lessons, instead of being borrowed from Genesis, should give with simplicity of ideas as well as of language, elementary notions concerning God, the almighty and beneficent Spirit of the Universe.

Children are generally capable of being impressed at an early age, with the attributes of the God of Christ, full of kindness for those who come to Him with a pure and loving heart, who thankfully enjoy the blessings vouchsafed to them, and who in earnest devotion to His will, strive to spread happiness around them. On this

foundation should be thoughtfully developed a system of religious morality, gradually expanding till its precepts embrace, with due consideration for the varied circumstances of life, all that can be devised to ensure life's moral success.—In imitation of the plan adopted by our Saviour of teaching by parables, moral duties should be inculcated by illustrative examples, real or imaginary, calculated to captivate as well as to instruct.

At a period still early, though varying according to the intelligence and cultural advantages of the children, their education might receive its theological element, still however, divested of dogmatic abstruseness. They would be taught that Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer, came into the world as the representative of God, to save and redeem mankind from the darkness and misery of sin, by diffusing the Light of Truth, Righteousness and Charity. He instructed men to approach their Heavenly Father in a constant communion of thanksgiving, prayer, and devoted love, and to those who prove the sincerity of that love by earnestly striving to do the divine will, he promised the inheritance of a future life.—All this can be corroborated by selections from the Gospels, which must, however, be made with great care and discrimination. There are a certain number of passages so tersely typical of the Doctrine of Christ, at once practical and sublime, that they should be learned by heart, but many are ill adapted for the young on account of their figurative language, or of the knowledge of times and circumstances necessary for properly understanding them, whilst some would be dangerous if taken literally, and others treat of things of which the knowledge would be premature.

The Doctrine of Christ being adopted as the standard of orthodoxy, the Old Testament will only be regarded as authoritative, as far as the holy nature of its teaching is conformable to that standard. All passages derogatory to the attributes of our Almighty Father as depicted to

us by our Saviour, are to be considered as human, not divine, and the incident of the disobedience of our first parents, instead of serving as a foundation for perennial wrath against mankind, to be appeased by a pre-determined fearful atonement, is to be regarded as an instructive episode of the legendary traditions of the Jewish race. As a record of the remotest antiquity, the Bible would present extreme interest, even if it were not hallowed by the reverence of so many ages, and by having upheld when idolatry was rampant on the earth, that monotheism which our Saviour raised to its full value. It would indeed be difficult to over-rate the instruction which persons previously well grounded in the doctrine of Christ, might safely derive in various branches of study from a careful perusal of the sacred book ; to say nothing of the great moral lesson taught by the sad annals of a selfish people, that proudly arrogated to itself a privilege of divine favor incompatible with the paternal benevolence of the Creator of all men, and that ended a career of about twenty centuries, in an accumulation of miseries, an overthrow, and a dispersion, of which the world's annals present no parallel.

But the moral instruction of the young is an entirely different consideration. Among the portions of the Bible now given to children on account of their entertaining character, there are few that do not contain here and there inappropriate passages, or of which the heroes thoroughly deserve imitation.

In the schools organized by the Disciples of Christ, truth and sincerity should reign supreme, and many a historical text-book now in use, especially in the upper grades, should be set aside or revised, because it judges acts according to the persons who commit them, instead of judging persons by their acts. In too many instances we see a falsification of colors begun by enlisting youthful reverence for Bible heroes whose faults are ignored, continued by upholding unreservedly the rapacious and

cruel Romans as admirable warriors, and confirmed by the general practice that each nation proudly records, under the plea of patriotism, its successes in the field, without distinguishing whether the cause was a just or an unjust one.—Much might be done by historical works written without fear or favor, according to true Christian principles, to tone down the system of military glory and supremacy, which now so much sways the destinies of nations.

It is not surprising that an insular country like ours should be noted for educational peculiarities demanding to be rectified by a cosmopolitan regime. Under a mistaken impression that a kind of boldness approaching to effrontery is necessary for pushing one's way in the world, a certain roughness of manner is encouraged, rather than repressed, in many of our public schools. This generally yields to the polishing influence of good society, but it is occasionally brought into ugly relief, especially through the effects of a narrow-minded practice, now happily on the wane, of training the boys, under the plea of patriotism, to look down on all other nations. One still sees persons, who behave very well among their home surroundings, cast off all restraint when travelling abroad, and seemingly delight in making themselves either disagreeable or ridiculous. They should remember that the duties of hospitality are reciprocal, and bear in mind that every misbehaviour on their part is put down to a general account against the reputation of their country.

SECTION 2.—SECULAR INSTRUCTION.

Foremost among the evils chargeable to the organizers of the Christian Church, who preferred to plant dogmatic theories on a Judaic foundation, rather than to develop the simple and practical system of Christ, may be reckoned the fierce conflicts of opinion which arose

concerning things unintelligible. But apart from these conspicuous and stirring results, it is sad to see, especially in the early ages of Christianity, how many capable and studious men, instead of making themselves really useful, wasted their brains in working out dogmatical problems, or pushed the virtue of self-control to the vanity of asceticism ; or leaving the world to its fate, buried themselves alive in deserts as barren as their existence.—A somewhat consoling period followed, in which monastic institutions, though still too much occupied with dialectic discussions, became valuable repositories of the knowledge of the times, largely composed of the literature of Greece and Rome, the latter in particular being greatly favored by the circumstance that Latin had become the official language of the Church. The furtherance given to the Fine Arts by Catholicism is undeniable, but SCIENCE has unfortunately a different tale to tell. Dealing with the truths of Nature, she might have become a pillar of strength for the Christian Church, had it been built up with the spiritual truths of the Doctrine of Christ ; but her progressive discoveries could not fail to be, sooner or later, in antagonism with the record transmitted to us by Moses, of the unscientific ideas which prevailed at his time. Enough, however, has been said to show that scientific errors are among the least important of the educational defects of the Pentateuch. Nor is there on the other hand much cause for alarm in the spirit of scepticism occasionally displayed by scientists. Accustomed to deal constantly with positive entities and demonstrable facts, they acquire without being aware of it, a peculiar rigidity of ideas that tends to Materialism, whilst at the same time a proud consciousness of the comprehensive grasp of their knowledge, and of their indefatigable acumen, makes them disinclined to acknowledge limits to either.

There is reason, however, to hope that Science herself will provide the remedy. The history of the past fore-

shadows that of the future, and the discoveries of the present century, founded on the researches of previous ones, most assuredly contain the germs of future progress. Centuries to come will reveal facts more and more recondite, and agencies more and more ethereal, till the perfected mind is competent to analyse its own functions, to unveil the secret of vitality, and to fathom the holy mystery of our connection with an unseen world.

There are other motives of an essentially practical character, for which the friends of Religion should earnestly seek to promote the educational diffusion of Science among all classes of the community.—Education has two important purposes: to store the memory with useful knowledge, and to enable the mind to make a good use of it. Formerly the practice prevailed of effecting the drilling of the mind by a kind of treadmill work that had no further purpose; but it is now beginning to be understood that Science of the proper sort, unites the two educational advantages, of supplying information that every one wants, and sharpening the intellect for the best use of it. I say of the proper sort, because what every one wants is not, as supposed by some, a deep study of isolated branches of Science, but a sound acquaintance with a carefully made selection of scientific facts and principles, and with their applications to the current requirements of daily life. All this can be rendered not only intelligible, but even entertaining to youthful minds, and the habitual practice of noticing cause and effect, produces in an eminent degree the quick Common Sense and Practical Wisdom, of which we have had more than once occasion to notice the paramount value for a proper discharge of Christian duties.

The educational worth of Science is, I am happy to say, fast gaining appreciation among those classes whose industrial or commercial interests it is calculated to promote, but it is less acknowledged among those wealthier members of society, who not having to work for a liveli-

hood, fancy they have no occasion to work at all. It is to be hoped that the Doctrine of Christ will open their eyes to a clearer perception of the value of developed abilities. As proprietors of estates, they should know the theory and practice of agriculture, as a captain ought to know the construction and management of his ship.—As magistrates, they should know the laws they have to administer, whilst at the same time they should endeavour to identify themselves in some measure, with the ways of living and thinking of the indigent and the uneducated, with whom they will chiefly have to deal. The penal institutions of other countries offer interesting matter for study and comparison.—Men of the world, trained under scientific guidance to genuine worldly wisdom, will exercise an improving influence on the progress of civilization, and bring to bear the restraint of Hygiene, good taste, and sound principles of economy, on the extravagances of fashion. Civil and political careers will assume a healthier and happier tone, when based on earnest and well-directed studies, and attended to with that spirit of practical religion, which brings men nearer to God, by bringing them nearer to each other in mutual good-will. It is in this sense that Political and Social Economy, and especially Moral Philosophy, should have high academic honors, and that History should be placed at their service.

To civilized nations, the Industrial Arts bring wealth, the Fine Arts honorable distinction. Architecture takes the lead in the noble devices of high art for elevating the mind to a devotional pitch. Music is not only invaluable for that purpose, but may, through judicious management, become a means of elevating the moral tone of every grade of the community.

Appendix.

CO-OPERATION OF THE CLERGY.

GENERAL REMARKS.

EDUCATION is in this country so much in the hands of the Clergy, that even if there were not other urgent motives, it would on this account be extremely desirable to gain their favourable appreciation of the proposed movement for restoring Christianity to the principles laid down by its divine Founder. Nor need this be despaired of; for they have not remained strangers to the intellectual development which is exercising so much influence on other bodies of well-educated men, and which I have described as the "spirit of the times." Except with a few veterans of immobility, we see orthodoxy itself wearing a much more genial countenance than fifty years ago. Eminent members of the Church now say openly what one would then scarcely have ventured to think, and many things are only upheld in the pulpit, for the good reason that as long as the Church maintains them, its ministers must adhere to them.—To feel that one is in a false position is the first step towards improvement, and it is but to do justice to the shrewdness of intellect and honesty of purpose of a large proportion of Clergymen, to assume that they do full oft experience that feeling in the discharge of their ministry. They have acquired in their lay studies too much knowledge of the sublime grandeur of the universe as revealed by modern science, and too much veneration for the omnipotent wisdom which breathes life into the

glorious fabric of nature, not to read to their congregations with inward compunction, the passages of the Pentateuch in which the attributes of Jehovah are almost reduced to human proportions, and profanely tainted with human propensities.

The remedy is at hand. Persevering erudition has shown, and is daily rendering more evident, that the Book of the Law, which a power-seeking and unscrupulous Jewish priesthood upheld as entirely written by inspiration, and consequently as the direct and veritable word of God, is only the most venerable and most interesting of all human records; that each portion is to be taken on its own merits, and that the incidents of a legendary character are simply to be treasured as the antique legends of the Jewish race. To that race our Saviour belonged, and this reason would of itself suffice to render the annals of the Children of Israel interesting for us above all others; but they should obviously be used to prepare and support, not to interfere with and detract from, the strict obedience due to his holy teaching.

No one better than the studious members of our Clergy, can be in a position to appreciate the immense difference between the Mosaic dispensation and that of Christ; the latter eminent for expansive benevolence and active charity, the former characterized outwardly by blood-stained ceremonies, and inwardly by a spirit of dismal egotism, stern, arrogant, and unprogressive. No one better than they can understand the Judaic influences through which the followers of Christ were led to mar the clear brightness of that "Light of Life" which their Master had brought into the world, by associating with it mysteries of a diametrically opposite character.

It behoves the Christian Clergy of all denominations to undertake cautiously but resolutely, to re-instate the divine Doctrine of Christ in its original simplicity of form and purpose; a work of duty which may ultimately

prove to be of material benefit to the Church itself. The irresistible current of modern thought is diffusing a spirit of religious enquiry in quarters where it is not yet noticed at the surface. Thousands are thirsting for progress, for whom the best safeguard against the impulses of sectarianism, the callous apathy of disappointment, or the sophistries of materialism, would be to join a peaceful union of Christians under the original banner of Christ; and it is obvious, that by first treating the movement with silent tolerance, and then gradually acquiring its guidance through cautious co-operation, our Clergy might ensure a lasting confirmation of their influence.

CLERICAL ORGANIZATION.

Independently of doctrinal improvement, the advocates of Christian progress, to whatever creed or country they may belong, should devote constant attention to perfecting the organization and functions of their respective Churches, seeking to derive from general experience, the best guarantees of respect and stability, and the most successful developments of practical usefulness. It must be remembered, however, that as in matters politic, the same institutions and customs which in one locality have met with success or failure, may have different results in different circumstances of race, political and social constitution, and educational advancement.

Among the numerous questions of which an earnest and unbiassed study from a utilitarian point of view will be alike interesting and instructive are the following:—

Where Church and State are united, does the influence of the latter appear to restrain religious progress, or does it on the contrary tend to make religious matters participate in the progress of secular ones?—In the case of separation, is it expedient that each country should have

its distinct religious organization, or that a general hierarchy should unite many countries, as is the case with the Roman Catholic Church ?

What country or denomination presents the most successful pattern of a clerical hierarchy, uniting with all the requirements of a strict discipline, a satisfactory system of appointments and preferments, and giving due weight to the approval of parishioners, without obliging the pastor to accommodate his teaching to their propensities ?

Which of the two systems respectively adopted by the Catholic and Protestant Churches, celibacy or matrimony, appears to work most satisfactorily ; or is it perhaps found that their relative advantages stand as follows ?—With unmarried priests, greater devotion to their work, and as long as they conduct themselves properly, greater respect on the part of the laity, but the reverse if they fall away from strict behaviour. With married clergy greater suitableness for admission to family circles, by which the sphere of their sympathy and advice is extended. To this may be added the assistance of a most appropriate helpmate in many branches of parish work.

Is the balance of advantages in favour of the freedom of behaviour still prevalent among many ministers of the Anglican Church with regard to hunting, dancing, frequenting of theatres and the like, or are the honor and usefulness of Holy Orders better upheld by the system of abstention from such indulgence, and by the general sedateness of social demeanour maintained in some other Protestant countries ?

MISSION WORK AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Great would be the increase of honorable authority which Religious Teachers might derive from an improved aptitude for their work. The training time they now

spend at the University or the College, in acquiring controversial erudition, could be devoted to familiarising themselves with such branches of practical knowledge as Sanitary, Domestic, Educational and Social Economy, eminently calculated to win the grateful confidence of their flock in private intercourse, and thus to prepare a ready acceptance of religious and moral teaching.

Civilization has its maladies. Where local advantages attract an industrial population, plethora soon sets in, and in the multitude that has outgrown its resources, a spontaneous fermentation engenders vice and misery. There, ordinary Parish Work is powerless, and recourse must be had to some such an organization as that which has wrought so much good, under the name of the "London City Mission," uniting if possible, practical Science with practical Religion. Operations thus accomplished under direct public supervision, have a very notable advantage over Mission Work carried on in distant regions, without the guarantee of an efficient control, and with a consequent liability to regrettable accusations.

There are savage races whose religion, unworthy of the name, is so redundant with superstition and iniquity, as to be a disgrace to humanity. Infinitely worthy of praise are the dauntless Missionaries of various denominations, who seek to introduce ideas of comfort and feelings of kindness, among bushmen and cannibals. But for one branch of mission work demanding the courage of a martyr, there are many requiring a zeal tempered with discretion, that can take due account of circumstances and surroundings. It is an unquestionable gain to convert at once a population numerous enough, or otherwise free enough, to enjoy the full fruits of its enlightenment; and it is another thing to accomplish here and there conversions entailing disruption of the most sacred ties, isolation, contumely, and danger, in the midst of a fanatical population.

Among the various ways in which the Association of

the Disciples of Christ may be expected to influence Mission work in foreign parts, are the following:—

The uncultured heathen are likely to embrace more readily the Christianity of Jesus, appealing in the simplest terms to mind and heart, than they do the Christianity of a complex orthodoxy.—Being assured that the testimony of Scripture is to be held in reverence, only as far as it is in accordance with the Doctrine of Christ, they will not, like the Zulu convert of Bishop Colenso, find here and there, their faith grating on their conscience, which on the contrary, cannot find fault with so golden rule as,—enjoy life's blessings rationally and thankfully, and help thy fellow-men to do the same.

The Disciples of Christ, thoroughly imbued with the practical principles of his divine doctrine, and trained as members of the CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE to great tolerance of opinion in matters of controversy and observance, will when sent among the Heathen by Societies of different denominations, behave as brothers, and never display those reciprocal ill-feelings, not to say animosities, which are now to wondering natives so frequent a cause of diffidence and disgust.

Then again, as members of the UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE, they will have accustomed themselves to judge men rather by what they *do*, than by what they *believe*, and they will be disinclined to interfere by direct conversion, with those who do their duty to the best of their knowledge, and are inoffensive and happy.

There are few forms of religion that do not contain germs of truth, which might be developed into enlightenment and happiness, especially if that development were taken in hand by the priests themselves, who ought to constitute everywhere the vanguard of intellectual and moral progress. Thus for instance, devout followers of Mahomet would have no difficulty in selecting from the Koran itself, elements of tolerance and peace, or

better still, they might undertake to give it on its author's behalf such a revision and adaptation as the Prophet himself might be supposed to wish it to receive, in accordance with the knowledge and requirements of the present times. The undertaking, if discreetly managed and well supported, might be a great success, and at all events, it would help to establish the important principle, that the founder of a Religion is better honoured by those who prove its adaptability to the progress of successive ages, than by those who uphold it in rigid immutability.*

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES.

The *monastic* principle of separation from the world, has given to the history of Christianity a peculiarity of coloring, always instructive, often sad.† Apart from the extraordinary aberrations related by Zimmermann in his celebrated work on "Solitude," and which almost make one lose patience with the human mind, there is generally speaking in the idea of persons in a normal condition of bodily and mental capabilities, exchanging the fruitful duties of ordinary existence for the sterile ones of a monastic life, something that produces a painful impression of wasted energy. On the other hand, it is but fair to say that in reviewing the feudal ages, one sees many examples of monastic establishments acting as the pioneers of knowledge and civilization, reclaiming uncultivated regions, and making good use of their power in carrying out works of public benefit, like the

* Is not this principle tacitly acted upon by enlightened members of the Mosaic persuasion?

† The word *monastic* originally applied to *solitary* life, has itself become a singular misnomer in its application to institutions eminently *gregarious*.

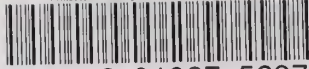
dam along the torrent Lütshenen, which still serves to protect from inundations the vale of Interlaken.*

There is one direction in which Religious Associations achieve truly admirable results, namely, the relief of suffering and distress. They are so peculiarly well fitted for hospital work, that Protestant ones have been successfully established, and are daily gaining favor, notwithstanding the prevailing distrust of all that bears the impress of a Catholic origin.

It is truly refreshing to see Institutions founded and supported by enlightened members of both persuasions, bestowing relief on the infirm and needy, irrespective of Creed. This pleasingly reminds us of the truly Christian words of the Archbishop of Paris,—“Charity is a neutral ground, on which all persuasions may join hands, and work harmoniously.” Such utterances are harbingers of times not far distant, when Conciliation and the Companionship of Good Works may rally the Clergy of all denominations round that banner of Purity and Progress, which our Saviour originally unfurled when he came to redeem the world, and on which were inscribed in letters of Light, the words, “Glory to God, and Happiness to Mankind.”

* A few suggestive hints may be borrowed from the Moravian Brotherhoods, and other communities with a practical tendency. As an example of a danger-beacon may be mentioned Mormonism.

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