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*March 13<sup>th</sup> 1855.*

BR 121 .M328 1849

Magoon, Elias Lyman.

Republican Christianity

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# REPUBLICAN CHRISTIANITY:

OR,

## TRUE LIBERTY,

AS EXHIBITED IN THE LIFE, PRECEPTS, AND EARLY  
DISCIPLES OF

THE GREAT REDEEMER.

BY

E. L. MAGOON,

AUTHOR OF "PROVERBS FOR THE PEOPLE," "LIVING ORATORS OF AMERICA,"  
"ORATORS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION."

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BOSTON:  
GOULD, KENDALL, AND LINCOLN,  
59 WASHINGTON STREET.  
1849.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1849, by  
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TO ALL

WHO HATE TYRANNY,

REVERE HUMANITY, BELIEVE IN PROGRESS,

AND FOLLOW CHRIST,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED.



# P R E F A C E .

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THE author of the following work avows his creed in a brief formula, as follows:—

First, he believes in Jesus Christ.

Second, he believes in no one else, as having the slightest authority over the personal freedom and religious rights of mankind.

Christ came into the world to redeem it, by the power of a beneficent life and vicarious death. He was born at the base of the pyramid of society, where the masses are densest, widest, and most oppressed; mingled with every class; endured every wrong; mitigated every form of suffering; sympathized most with the most abused; denounced political and spiritual tyranny in the strongest terms; and, finally, fell a victim, mangled by that malignant pride and power which, in the persons of high priests, crafty scribes, and official Pharisees, ever stand ready to inflame the popular mind with cruel prejudice, leading the multitudes to spare a robber and murder their greatest Benefactor, so that oppression may yet flourish, and their own ungodly immunities remain secure.

In the first part, we have attempted to portray the human, as well as the divine career of Christ. Viewing him at five different stages of his progressive work, we see how he lived out the diversified

experience of all the injured, before he came to the consummation of his mission, and that this preparatory discipline fully qualified him gloriously to accomplish the salvation he came to perform.

In the second part, an examination is entered upon touching the character of the primitive church. The author believes that Jesus Christ, eighteen centuries ago, gave our race a perfect model of republicanism; and that this was not only exemplified in his life, and confirmed by his death as the highest gift to all men, but that it was strikingly imbodyed in the original formation of the Christian church. The analysis of the argument on this point, as well as the authorities by which it is fortified, are before the reader, and he may judge with respect to the correctness of the deduction. It will be seen that the author nowhere offers a direct defence of the views held by his own denomination, but presents data from standard writers, which can easily be verified. If any persons are dissatisfied with the statements adduced, they need not long doubt with whom to quarrel.

In the third part, premises laid in the character of Christ, and illustrated in the constitution of the primitive church, are applied to existing evils, showing the legitimate influence of Christian doctrine. The author is aware that this is a delicate matter; but he would hope that the topics involved in the discussion have been handled in a way adapted neither to exasperate the passionate unnecessarily, nor make the judicious grieve. With prayerful solicitude, and, he thinks, true conservatism, he has written under the influence of no sectarian feeling or sectional prejudice, expressing as plainly as possible what he sincerely believes, and fawning for no favors. Herein are thoughts and emotions which have haunted the author for years; and they are now sent forth to stir

in other bosoms, and thence to produce, according to the soil of their growth, a blessing or a curse.

There are many young men in our country, cultivating the earth, swinging the hammer, or driving the plane, whose superior endowments and hidden aspirations generate in their aching bosom purposes most honorable to human nature, but which true merit is slow to confess. These are surrounded by the mercenary and grovelling, who are as indifferent to the effulgence and utility of sanctified genius as they are to the glories of a flower crushed under their miry heel. To arm such young brethren with fortitude, foster their beneficent purposes, and share their sympathetic regards, has been a primary purpose with the author, and will constitute his most genial reward.

We live in what we are pleased to call a free and happy land. As we here enjoy the amplest means, and are urged by the strongest motives, it is certain that we should employ the wisest and most heroic enterprise, to bless every section and rank of our common country and the world. The present is an age auspicious for humanity, inasmuch as good books are every where multiplied, benevolent institutions are springing up of every kind, and the divinest enfranchisement is rapidly embracing all our race. Telegraphs, with lightning alacrity, bring the remotest regions into near neighborhood, and speak almost simultaneously to multifarious classes and states. Commerce, with a body of iron and soul of flame, darts athwart oceans, the mighty auxiliary of the cross, and pledge of universal brotherhood. In our western world, innumerable presses multiply intelligence with a speed and profusion truly sublime, causing all the intellects of antiquity to become contemporary with ourselves, and the willing agents of a civilization perpetually

improved and indescribably grand. In the eastern hemisphere, the most startling developments of Providence are continually transpiring. Napoleon is represented as saying, "When I am dead, my soul will return to France, and dwell in the hearts of the French people, like thunder in the clouds of heaven, and throb with ceaseless life in new revolutions." In an infinitely nobler sense, it would seem as if all the champions of outraged humanity, in every epoch and nation, were becoming incarnate again, or exerting, through occult means, a redeeming power in every clime. The masses are finding their hands, feeling their powers, and asserting their rights. The almightiness of the great Captain of our salvation, the rejected, toil-worn, lacerated, murdered Nazarene, is imbuing the intellect and heart of man—of all mankind. Let bigots tremble, and let tyrants flee, for the hour of their doom draws near. Crumbling thrones, decaying mitres, obsolete creeds, and shattered chains, are blown aside by the tempests of popular indignation, giving space and capacity for humanity to exercise itself, and taste the rapture of those energies which heaven bends low in our day to emancipate, and which hell must be permitted no longer to bind.

E. L. M.

CINCINNATI, *April 1, 1849.*

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# REPUBLICAN CHRISTIANITY.

“Know, then, that when I say the religion of Protestants is in prudence to be preferred before yours, on the one side, I do not understand by your religion the doctrine of Bellarmine or Baronius, or any other private man amongst you, nor the doctrine of the Sorbonne, of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree, the doctrine of the Council of Trent, so, accordingly, on the other side, by the religion of Protestants, I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, nor the Confession of Augsburg, or Geneva, nor the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England; no, nor the harmony of Protestant Confessions; but that in which they all agree, and that which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of faith and action; that is, THE BIBLE. The Bible, I say, the Bible *only*, is the religion of Protestants.” — *Chillingworth*.

“It was from Christianity that man derived the spiritual element wherein he could once again become self-sustaining, free, and personally invincible; a new vitality awoke in the bosom of the freshened earth, and she became fructified for the development of new productions.” — *Ranke*.

“Christianity, which has declared that all men are equal in the sight of God, will not refuse to acknowledge that all citizens are equal in the sight of the law.” — *De Tocqueville*.

“L’Evangile est démocratique, le Christianisme est républicain!” — *Les Conventionnels*.

“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?”

“One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” — *Jesus Christ*.

# PART I.

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## THE REPUBLICAN CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE INFANCY OF CHRIST.

IN HIS ADVENT, IDENTIFIED WITH THE LOWLY CONDITION IN WHICH  
THE MASSES OF MANKIND ARE BORN.

THE ancient economy of grace was closing; the era of transition to a better dispensation had arrived. Every thing indicated the approach of a radical and stupendous change. The concluding words of ancient prophecy were full of blended fear and hope. The language of Haggai was startling. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." All reliable interpreters consider this as referring to the coming of the great Redeemer of mankind. His approach was prepared; the place of his appearance on earth was appointed; and his advent was the birth of salvation, the type of all redeeming influence, the pledge of universal freedom.

In the first place, the coming of Messiah was prepared. Jehovah declared aforetime, that he would shake the mighty kingdoms of the earth, and deprive them of that power with which they withstood the progress of exalted principles among

men. "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." This, doubtless, refers to the great political concussions whereby the power of the heathen should be broken, their pride humbled, and they should thus become qualified to receive the salvation prepared for the world. Hence God declares, "And I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother."

In view of this great revolution in the condition and prospects of mankind, Isaiah had long before declared, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The fulfilment of this gracious promise is recorded in the words which the angel of the Lord spake unto Joseph. "Take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now, all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Immanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us."

It is interesting to observe that all nations known in history have ever expected a Liberator, a person mysterious, divine, and one who, according to the ancient oracles, should bring them salvation, and reconcile them with the Eternal. Prideaux, in his work on the Jews, observes that "the necessity of a mediator between God and man was from the commencement a prevailing opinion among all people." In proportion as the glorious realization approached, an extraordinary light diffused itself over the world, like the bright beamings of Jacob's star. Cicero caught some of its beams, and in his Republic announced a law eternal and universal, the law of all nations and all times; a single and common master, who should be God even, and whose reign was about to commence. Virgil,

recalling the ancient oracles, celebrated the return of the Virgin, the birth of prevailing order, and the descent of the Son of God from heaven. To his eye a grand epoch speedily advanced; all the vestiges of crime were effaced, and earth was forever delivered from fear. The divine infant, who should reign over the peaceful world, will receive for first presents the simple fruits of earth, and the serpent will expire near his cradle. The universal tradition, moreover, was, that this celestial envoy would be man and God combined, and that he would come to achieve the salvation of the world. "He will save us," said Plato, "by teaching us the true doctrine," — "Shepherd, prince, universal teacher, and sovereign truth," said Confucius, "he will possess all power in heaven and upon the earth." This lively anticipation of a mighty liberator and restorer, vanquisher of demons and imbodiment of supreme good, was doubtless permitted to prevent the nations from falling into complete ignorance and despair. It never ceased to prevail, in a manner more or less distinct, through all the pagan world, from a period long anterior to Moses to the auspicious night when the Magi, guided by a supernatural meteor, came from the East seeking the Star destined to elevate Israel and overthrow idolatry. Who is this Savior — the desire of all nations — the true Messiah, sent of God? We have but one response, and shall never need another — Jesus Christ, who was all that the nations expected him to be, all that the prophets declared he would be, the true Son of God, begotten from eternity, his Wisdom and his Word, incarnate and divine.

Humanity has never ceased to pour forth its desires and tears at the foot of such altars as could be found; it has never ceased to adore under some form; and hence, since worship is a universal instinct, in the most sacred of books God has entitled himself "the desire of all nations." But at the time Jesus of Nazareth was born, more than ever before, poor, degraded, persecuted, bleeding humanity laid its hands upon its mouth, and its mouth in the dust, crying for a deliverer to

appear. Its prayer was heard. The fulness of time had come, and "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." The eternal Son of God deigned to take our nature and clothed himself with our mortal flesh. He united in himself the divine and the human; and these two natures formed but one person, Jesus Christ, the God-man who was the expectation of all the nations. He appeared at the time foretold, "and we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." His incarnation was a great mystery indeed, but a mystery so analogous to our wants and so conformable to the universal reason of mankind, that it has been perpetually believed ever since the fall.

But what end did the divine Word propose to himself in his incarnation? What secret designs impelled him to descend so low, and unite himself to our nature? "He came," says Paul, "to regenerate all things in the heavens and upon the earth." His mission was as grand as it was benevolent. It was worthy of Him by whom all things were made; and who alone was able to renovate—regenerate all. Our nature had become depraved, and it was the prerogative of Christ, by his sacrifice, precepts, and example, to create us anew in the image of the Highest. It seemed to the apostle that this sublime work, achieved through such wonderful means, would blaze with ineffable splendor, not only in the world which we inhabit, but beyond us to all worlds, even to the most exalted height of the heavens. It was necessary that the Source of all light, by making himself man, should enter the night in which humanity was involved in order to disperse it. The regeneration of our nature is the image of its primitive creation: the first and the second are equally the work of the divine Word. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." He renews our spirit in the same way as he formed it, by the communication of himself: to hear, believe, obey, this was man's first act; he was born by the throes



of faith, and the word which originally gave to him life, is the same which reproduces it.

The king of day is glorious and sublime in all his course, but he is the most beautiful as he comes into view and disappears. The resemblance which this bears to the great Sun of Righteousness is manifest. We are ever to remember that in Jesus Christ our nature was intimately united with Divinity the most exalted, and that in the triumphant Redeemer humanity is already enthroned in heaven. He came to unfold to mankind their capacities of greatness, to impart generous conceptions and reveal the splendid destiny that awaited them, to awaken aspirations after a nobler character and a higher being, to kindle in their bosoms a love for all the virtues imbodyed in himself, and throw wide open before them the gates which invite to life without a pang, and glory without a cloud.

This, then, is the truth we are to observe at the outset of our discussion; on the one hand, that the appearance of Christ had been, from eternity, predetermined by the divine will, and, on the other, that this determination was carried into effect precisely at the period when all was made ready for the purposes of his mission. But Christ, according to all records, sacred and profane, does not stand isolated in universal history, but was heralded among the Jews by the law and the prophets, — among heathen nations by symbols, significant myths, and vivid traditions — by philosophy, poetry, and art — by the very depravity which kept alive a painful consciousness of a doom deserved, and which awakened the deepest longings for the appearance of one mighty to save. This fore-appointment of the Messiah from all eternity is especially stated by the apostle Paul; as when, for instance, he asserts that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world; while the historical necessity of the Redeemer's appearance at a particular period is announced in those assertions of Scripture, that the Son of God and of man was born in the fulness of time; in other words, that he appeared at the precise moment when the preparations for his advent were completed, and the world in such

a state, that the influence of his mission, however much opposed, could never be entirely lost. He appeared in the period prepared — at exactly the right time.

Secondly, the birthplace of the Redeemer was appointed, and comported well with the character of his mission. It resembled the spiritual character and the temporal condition of the great masses of mankind. Man had fallen from his high estate into the most abject condition; and, in order to redeem him, it was necessary for the great Captain of Salvation to pass through the deserts of penury and the tomb. The first Adam had desolated Eden with sin; the second Adam, in the humblest home of misery, will open the fountains of life for all. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The first man had changed every zephyr of the world's garden into destructive tempests, every flower into thistles and venomous stings, every sweet stream into bitterness and woe. But He who, from the eternal throne, wings the thunders with power, stoops to the manger, and lies bound in swaddling clothes. Celestial purity blends with and springs from the least corrupt source on earth, exemplifying at once the greatest marvel in physical creation, and the most astonishing movement of heavenly love. In the first instance, the divine was destroyed by the human; in the second, from humanity divinity is produced, pledged to heal every wound sin has inflicted, and spread over a groaning and degraded world joy and glory again.

It is worthy of especial remark that the circumstances of poverty and desolation which characterized the advent of Christ were the same that attend the birth of the great masses of mankind. Doubtless the coming of the Redeemer was arranged with reference to this fact. "He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He rendered himself in the greatest possible degree accessible to all; he bore the deprivations of the most obscure, and, from his very birth, accumulated a wealth of experience and sympathy with the outcast and suffering of

every degree, so as to be able to enrich every child of poverty, and mitigate every pang of woe. In every age and clime there has been many a Simeon waiting for the consolation of Israel, all of whom felt that the needed Redeemer, to be efficacious, must be weak as well as strong, poor as well as infinitely rich. Plato not only shows that in his day a divine instructor was desired, but he strikingly described the attributes he would need to bring and the doom he would meet. "He must be poor, and void of all qualifications but those of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproofs; and therefore, within three or four years after he began to preach, he would be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last be put to death." The feebleness and penury of Christ would give him ready access to the great majority of mankind, while his omnipotence and infinite stores of heavenly merit would qualify him to atone for all their sins. Blessed was the lowly condition of the infant Redeemer, and auspicious were the mild beamings of the star that heralded his birth. Then a softness began to spread over the obdurate heart of man; the curtains of mystery began to fall, and immortal glory rose on the enraptured view.

Lamartine, in visiting the spot appointed to be the scene where the advent of Messiah should transpire, gave utterance to his feelings in the following words:—

"It appeared to me, on ascending the last hills which separated me from Nazareth, as if, from the summit of the mountains of Galilee, I were about to contemplate at its source that all-comprehensive and fruitful religion which for nearly two thousand years has established and is establishing itself in the universe, and which has refreshed so many generations by its clear and vivifying waters. Here was the source in the hollow of the rock, which I here tread under my feet, and the hill of which I have ascended the last heights, has borne on its sides the salvation, the life of the light, the hope of the world. It was here, a few paces from me, that He, the model of man, was born amongst men, to withdraw them by his word and his

example from the sea of error and corruption in which the human race had been for some time immersed. If I reflected on these important subjects in the character of a philosopher, it was the period at which took place the greatest event which ever affected the moral or political world ; an event the repercussion of which still impresses at the present time a principle of motion and life upon the whole intellectual world. It is here that the greatest, the most just, the most wise, the most virtuous, of all men emerged from obscurity, from ignorance and misery ; here was his cradle, here was the theatre of his actions and his affecting discourses. Thence he departed, whilst yet in his youth, with a few obscure and illiterate men, whom he had inspired with confidence in his genius, and with courage for the accomplishment of their mission, which was knowingly to contend against an order of ideas and things not strong enough to resist him, but still strong enough to cause his death. Thence, I repeat, he went forth with confidence to conquer death, and the universal empire of posterity ; thence has flowed Christianity, its source obscure ; a drop of water unperceived in the hollow of the rock of Nazareth, from which two sparrows could scarcely allay their thirst, which a single beam of the sun could have absorbed, and which, at the present day, like the vast ocean of mind, has filled every abyss of human wisdom, and bathed with its inexhaustible waves the past, the present, and the future. Did I entertain a doubt of the divinity of that event, still would my soul have been strongly affected on approaching the first theatre on which the glorious deed was enacted, and I should have uncovered my head, and bent my forehead in reverence of that occult and governing will which has made such mighty and important things flow from so weak and so imperceptible a commencement.

“ But, on considering the mysteries of Christianity as a Christian, it was here, under this small portion of the blue firmament, at the bottom of this narrow and sombre valley, under the shadow of this little hill, the old rocks of which appear

even at the present day to be all split with the trembling of joy which they experienced in giving birth to and in bearing the infant WORD, or with the shivering of grief which they felt in entombing the WORD crucified ; here was the fatal and holy spot of the world which God selected from all eternity, on which his truth, his justice, and his incarnate love, in an infant God, was to descend upon the earth ; it was here that the divine breath descended, at its proper time, in a poor cottage, the abode of humble labor, of simplicity of mind, and misfortune ; it was here, that within the bosom of a pure and innocent virgin, he gave life to something like herself, sweet, tender, and compassionate ; as a man, it was full of suffering, patience, and lamentation ; as a God, it was powerful, supernatural, wise, and strong ; it was here that the God-man submitted to our ignorance, our weakness, our labor, and our misery, during the obscure years of his retired life, and in some measure entered into the exercises of it, and practised the ways of the world, before he edified it by his word, healed it by his prodigies, and regenerated it by his death ; it was here that the heavens opened, from which burst forth upon the world his incarnate spirit, his fulminating word, which was to consume till the end of time all error and iniquity, to try, as in the fire of the crucible, our virtues and our vices, and to kindle before the only holy God that incense which was never afterwards to be extinguished, the incense of the renovated altar, the perfume of universal charity and truth.”

Yes, along those ancient plains reverberated the angelic shout, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men.” There the Word sowed divine seed, and the Spirit made it productive. For eighteen centuries men have seen it blossom and ripen ; they recognize the beneficence of a God in the inexhaustible supply, and every where pant to feed on the fruit produced from that tree of life which was removed from the paradise radiant with riches of every kind, and planted in the abode of the wretchedly poor. Lamb of God, thy birth-place was well chosen, and thy first moan seems to say, “Chil-

dren of a fallen race, the night is dark, but the morning breaks ! Liberty is born !”

In the third place, in his advent, Christ was the type of all-exalting power and the pledge of universal redemption.

Whenever God wishes to execute some grand result, one of those comprehensive and profound revolutions which leave perpetual traces among mankind, — when he would rend down the obscure curtains of his providence, and reveal newer and vaster domains whereon to develop his own almightiness and the expanding faculties of man, — he does not ordinarily choose as instruments those who are armed with power or clothed with authority ; but, in some retired walk of life, on some secluded farm, in some lonely shop, suddenly his potent spirit seizes a rugged worker, unknown, unlettered, void of all force save that which swells in his aspiring soul, and, from that obscurity, go forth trumpet tones to arouse the nations, flame and energy to enlighten and bless mankind. He who possesses all resources, and can readily select from means infinitely diversified, sees fit forever to employ weak things in the destruction of the mighty. Before honor is humility, or a lowly station. Joseph was raised from the prison to the throne. Moses and David were called from the shepherd’s fold to feed the inheritance of the Lord. Gideon acknowledged himself to be of “the least of the families of Israel ;” but the great Captain of our salvation arose from an origin still more obscure. It would seem to be the initiatory truth of Christianity, that the lower one descends in humiliation, the higher shall he rise in exaltation. The lower his foundation of humility is laid, the loftier and wider shall his crown of glory shine.

More true greatness is born in hovels than in palaces. All great conservative influences come up from the oppressed and industrious classes. Ordinarily from the husbandman’s cottage or the artisan’s shop emerge the efficient pioneers of social improvement and national weal. As the exponents and executors of divine purposes, they trample on hoary wrongs, dissolve unholy coalitions, and win deliverance for the down-

trodden every where. They are the true nobility of heaven, the born monarchs of mind, whose credentials are manifest in their beneficent deeds, and whose patent of royalty consists in their native grandeur of soul. They are infinitely greater than the kings of physical empire, since they can defy the greatest concentration of martial force, and laugh to scorn the rack and the flame. The god-leavened ponderers on creation, and the god-armed deliverers of their race, always struggle up from the lowest depths of experience, meditation, development, till they obtain a firm hold on the deepest as well as broadest mass: then how these moral Titans will make the mountains shake! They have drunk from every bitter cup, felt the galling weight of every burden, smarted under every lash; their own wounds have become the inlets through which they imbibe the pangs of all their brethren in endurance vile, and they rise up in the omnipotence of humanity made divine by its purpose to redeem and disintrall mankind.

Individual excellence dawns on the world from obscurity, like day from night. The mightiest rivers rise from sources the most occult, and the brightest gems are found in caverns the most obscure. Like Iceland moss, the finest capacities of our race often grow beneath the snow, and must thence be sought. The matured champion is a babeling at first, cradled in poverty, nursed on the bosom of loveliness, invigorated by stern realities, while down on his loneliness heavenly beams are streaming, and filling him with splendors in due time to inundate the globe. It may be that the young heart for a long time lies torn and bleeding in the predestined deliverer, before it has generated momentum adequate to the emergencies he is called to meet. Gently at first gleam angelic thoughts on the darkness of the infant brain; long and silently in the soul mature the incipient purposes of moral warfare, like unfolded flowers in the profoundest depths of the sea; but by and by they burst on the world's gaze and fill heaven with odors most sweet. Such a heart is born to become the temple of religion the most pure, the diffuser of an influence the most beneficent,

and the tomb in which it goes at length a broken sacrifice to repose, becomes the altar of liberty for all our race.

“’Tis rare in Fame’s rich galaxy to shine  
 With steadfast blaze unwithering, but to dawn  
 From darkness, scatter off the black eclipse  
 That veils the withered lustre — this, most rare,  
 Maketh man’s soul an everlasting fire  
 Worthy the God that hung the heavens with light ;  
 ’Tis hard for downcast spirit to o’erleap  
 Ruin’s sad barriers ; but Heaven’s angels drop  
 Soft dews beneath his burning feet, his flight  
 Imp with strong plumes ; his coming doth adorn  
 The earth he moves on ; till Remorse, abashed,  
 Before the orient glories fades and flies.”

We have observed that all exalting power springs from the dense masses of mankind ; that redemption is seldom or never born in the palace but in the hut ; and that of this fact Jesus Christ is the highest illustration and the most striking type. We would here add, that the greater the want the greater will be the supply which Providence ever grants to suffering man. Great occasions have never been wanting in great champions ; nor have the greatest and best of heroes ever failed in finding fitting scope for the divinest energies they possessed. This palpable and merciful law is of itself sufficient to demonstrate the existence of an infinitely wise and powerful Lawgiver. Its most glorious exemplification was recognized by the wise men who came to Bethlehem. They there found Immanuel, God with us, born at the base of the pyramid of human society, where the masses are broadest and most oppressed, far down there unveiling the Sun of Righteousness, that up through all the superincumbent myriads of men, purifying and emancipating beams might shine to diffuse impartial goodness and universal hope. The ancient patriarch saw in his dream a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Perhaps its foot measured the broad diameter of earth, but its top rested at a single point on the throne of God. Christ came to give substance to that vision, in the presence of all men, as the inspiration of



faith and encouragement of hope, to pour effulgence from base to summit of that highway to glory, planting attendant angels on the lowest step, increasing attractions at each ascent, and the amplest provisions of immortal joy at the journey's end.

It remains to show that Christ was not only the type of all exalting power, but that he was the pledge of universal freedom. This will appear from a consideration of the divine nature he possessed, and the divine tokens which heralded his birth. He was the "Word made flesh," the creativeness of Jehovah incarnate among a created, fallen race, himself without sin and powerful to redeem the depraved from every stain. A word is the clothing of an idea; an idea never presents itself made; the human mind can only conceive it under the drapery of expression. As soon as an idea presents itself, the mind hastens to create the equivalent word; without this the idea remains vague at least, if not forever unseizable. Christ was the incarnation of eternal power, ancient truth and mercy imbodied. He was the Word made flesh, the Divinity in idea divinely clothed in a vesture of manhood, God humanized. In order to save man, to conduct him to the Supreme, the Word, all-creative from eternity, becomes flesh in time on behalf of those who could not behold him as Divinity alone. He assumes mortal shape and substance, passes through every phase of human experience, and through a human voice, thrilling through human sympathies, calls to himself those who, by being first conformed to the God incarnate, may afterwards gaze on the unclouded majesties of Jehovah. May not this be the meaning of Paul? "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." He became human and dwelt among us. He was transformed on the mount, where he not only appeared in his own glory, but where he caused the spiritual law and the prophecies to be represented by Moses and Elias. Then they who were present could say, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." Those spirits whom Christ summoned to the transfiguration, and

revealed to men panting with astonishment on earth, were old acquaintances, with whom he talked in familiar terms respecting the great redemption he had come to achieve. Older than the human race, mightier than the worlds he formed, the babe of Bethlehem struggled into being amid tears, and groans, and oppressions, that from the ox's stall and that shepherd group might go forth a transforming power to revolutionize all tyrannical customs and break all accursed bonds. He was the new representative of mankind, a divine one, the destroyer of heathenism, the founder of a new era, the universal atoner, the first born of God, the father of a new spiritual human race. His advent was unseen save to the pure, the humble, and disconsolate, and was as noiseless as the falling dew or gleaming stars. But as that young breath first blended with the chill night air where suffering reclined, and even the brute creation moaned, earth felt a new power whispering above and penetrating beneath, like light and life pervading every where, foretelling complete redemption and universal joy.

Man has indeed become debased, cast down, and trodden under foot. He has crawled on abjectly for centuries in the very dust. Tyranny, superstition, and vice have bound him in cruel fetters, and hurled him down to the caverns of ignorance and night. But the vital spark has never been extinguished; the most outrageous abuse can never quite obliterate the image of God in his soul. In the deepest degradation, in the gloomiest dungeon, man has ever prayed for light and struggled for freedom. Independence of mind, of heart, of body, of soul, — this is the great boon designed by Heaven for all; and to reconquer this the wonderful star burned on the hills of Judea, and Mary laid her still more wonderful child in the ox's crib. He will come forth from that comfortless abode to bestow on earth richer blessings than all her kings can give — moral and intellectual improvement; free limbs to toil and free minds to soar; blood unchilled by the oppressor's touch; thoughts, souls, swift to compass the skies and ascend to heaven.

We live in an age of fearful commotion. A mighty storm is overturning thrones and changing the aspect of whole continents. What we have yet seen is only the beginning of the end. The germs of more radical and comprehensive revolutions were planted eighteen centuries ago. In order to interpret the present and anticipate the future correctly, it is necessary often to go back in thought and "place ourselves at the Christian era. This was, in every respect, a most interesting period. It was the one to which all prior history had been pointing. It was 'the fulness of time,' for which all preceding time had been making ready. It stands conspicuous, not because a new order of things, different in causes and tendency entirely from the old, was then established,—but because a new and mighty instrument was then first put forth, in aid of the same purpose, which before had made but slow and feeble progress. For these reasons, therefore, that it imbodyes in itself the result of all that had gone before, and because the series of events, from that time to this, is sufficiently long to illustrate their connection, it is the most appropriate and interesting point that we can start from."

We stand, then, at that momentous period, which the introduction of Christianity has immortalized. And what is the first thought that bursts upon our mind? It is, that we are standing, at the very moment, in the midst of a most glorious revolution—a revolution glorious in itself, but incomparably more so in its tremendous and never-ending effects upon the human race. Yes, the star that rose in the east,—mild, peaceable, and radiant, as the young child to which it pointed; the guide of the wise men; the light, as it has proved, of the world,—the "star in the east" was the herald of an event, mightier in itself, and mightier in its consequences, than any which the dazzling sun, in all his brilliancy, ever looked upon. The pæan of angels, as it sounded in the ears of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, proclaimed the advent of a Being, before whom and whose kingdom tyrants have trembled and conquerors fled away. The introduction of Chris-

tianity was, indeed, a revolution. And what a revolution! Where can we learn that such events belong to the world, that they interest man, whenever and wherever he is found, if not from this, the first, the greatest of the series? Where can we be taught that the great end of great events has been the improvement, the progress, the elevation of man, if not in this, this "Heaven's best gift to man"? We need not say, in this day and generation, that Christianity stopped not with those to whom it was proclaimed, that the influence of this greatest, because religious revolution was neither limited nor partial.

For what was Christianity, and what was the purpose of the revolution which ushered it in? It came, indeed, to proclaim that there was a God, a kind and beneficent Father. It pointed to a heaven. It spoke of a hereafter. But it did more than this. It came nearer to man as an inhabitant of earth. It whispered to him that he was an immortal being; that he had within him a noble spirit, capable of exalted attainments, and destined to lofty purposes, even here; a spark of divinity itself. It bade him cultivate, improve, exalt it. It bade him rise up in his native strength, to shake off the tyranny of ignorance, of vice, and of his fellow-man; to burst asunder the shackles which bound down his high nature. It bade him be free; in mind, that he might be intelligent; in conscience, that he might be holy; free in every thing, as his Creator had designed him. This was the grand purpose of the Christian dispensation, to fit man for heaven, by making him all that he could be on earth, and to give him an impulse, in this upward direction, which he should feel to the end of time.

In the book of Revelation the perpetual promise to the Redeemer is, "I will give him the morning star." Yes, there, in the sombre, but yet brightening skies, still shines, in full view of man, the ever-enduring star of morn, the herald and pledge of that "hope that comes to all." Beneath its placid beams the great purposes of infinite love and mercy will be rolled into full execution. Neither kingcraft nor priestcraft can hurl it from its lofty home, nor has hell storms dark enough entirely to obscure its cheering light. It will forever shine, the

pledge of deliverance from all wrongs, and freedom to all ranks ; the memento of that beginning of good days when God descended to the lowest parts of earth, that he might exalt man to the sublimest heights of heaven.

“ All stars, that fill Time’s mystic diadem,  
Are falling stars, save that of Bethlehem.”

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE YOUTH OF CHRIST.

IN HIS YOUTH, OCCUPIED IN TOIL SUCH AS THE GREAT MAJORITY  
OF MEN PURSUE.

JESUS CHRIST came into this world to redeem it, to fill it with needful instruction and saving grace. There is not only infinite efficacy in the power of his blood to cleanse from sin ; there is also light in his life adapted to every age, force in his example vouchsafed to sustain the aspiring every where, and fortify the weak. The period of early youth, his preliminary training, is less amply portrayed in the Gospels than his public ministry ; but the stupendous achievements of his maturity bear an intimate relation to his juvenile career, rendering it desirable that we should contemplate the entire life of the great Redeemer as a unit, his teachings and actions as they are connected throughout, so as to derive the greatest profit from the harmonious view.

In this discussion, we will consider two general points. In his youth, Christ was occupied in toil such as the great majority of men pursue. That toil was prosecuted under circumstances adapted to develop his powers, and prepare him for the perfect accomplishment of his divine mission on earth.

In the first place, Christ, in his youthful condition on earth,

was occupied in toil such as the great majority of men pursue. The Roman domination embraced nearly all the known world, when the Redeemer was born at the precise moment and in the exact locality where the sacred oracles had predicted that he should appear. Springing from a race of kings, and, in his extreme indigence, deprived even of the humblest asylum upon the earth he came to save, he represented in this double state the entire race of man. All the unfortunate who bear the burdens of toil and of pain, exiled patriotism, banished merit, wandering tribes, and outraged benefactors of every degree, may turn to the babe of Bethlehem, and recognize a brother in "HIM through whom Jehovah bestows salvation," who was cradled into suffering by both power and want, and was from the outset violently pursued by the tyranny he came to overthrow. Several of the first years of our Lord's temporal life were passed in almost entire obscurity, wherein he accomplished the destiny of man, eating the bread which he gained in the sweat of his brow. Submissive to every filial obligation, it is recorded that he obeyed Joseph and Mary with perfect docility; he accomplished with them the precepts of the law, and it was thus that he grew in wisdom, in age, and in favor before God and men. As the deliverer of man condemned, the ennobler of man degraded, it was necessary that Jesus should at every step be the model of man in perfection, the source of all the graces by which we can, in following his precepts, and imitating his examples, reëstablish in ourselves the image of God, which sin has defaced. No period of his progress, no incident in his life, is unworthy of our profoundest study. We should strive to penetrate the thoughts of eternal wisdom, and contemplate his ways in the marvellous work of our redemption.

Infinite wisdom has not seen fit to grant us copious and minute details of our Savior's early life, but enough are transmitted to us to excite interesting thoughts and impart the most profitable lessons. The events of his maturity command our attention by their grandeur; but they are not the only ones worthy of our observation. On the contrary, we should study

the *growth* of this divine Being, "seek for the bud which concealed the seed, and the powers that conspired to unfold it."

No other child was ever harassed by adversity and subject to the necessity of exhausting toil, like Jesus Christ. It began in the manger and ended only on the cross. A divine messenger came to Joseph, and directed him to fly with the child and his mother to Egypt. Think of the length of the journey required; the ignorance of the parents with respect to the way they were to pursue; the youth and feebleness of Mary, and the trembling age of Joseph; the delicate condition of the infant they were to transport so far, over so rough a way; and especially think how utterly unprovided they were with means of supporting themselves in a foreign land. Groups of the lonely, sojourning in poverty far away from natal soil, behold your prototype and consolation in Christ! How did that family procure food by the way, a shelter from the sun, and a covert from the storm? Think of the tasks and sorrows that encompassed the child Jesus, in the dawning of his first consciousness, and the exercise of his first strength.

At length the angel of the Lord again appears unto Joseph, saying, "Take the boy and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the life of the boy." Josephus has told us who the tyrant was who had driven the young Redeemer from Judea, and whose death now allows his return. It was that Herod, who, at the close of a blood-stained life of seventy years, goaded by the furies of an evil conscience, racked by a painful and incurable disease, waiting for death but desiring life, raging against God and man, and maddened by the thought that the Jews, instead of bewailing his death, would rejoice over it as the greatest of blessings, commanded the worthies of the nation to be assembled in the Circus, and issued a secret order that, after his death, they should all be slain together, so that *their* kindred, at least, might have cause to weep for his death. It was this monster who sought to destroy the infant Christ, and it is the like of him that perpetually persecute the innocent, feeble, and unfortunate of earth. But he who is about to return from Egypt will grow up to be a

mightier than Moses to conduct the people from bondage and deliver the tyrant's prey. His first impressions are those of cruel wrongs ; his earliest days are troubled by despotic rage ; his youthful limbs are chafed with incessant toil ; and he grows up keenly to observe on the one hand benignant old age buffeted by scorn and doubt, while on the other the "bright consummate flower" of her sex bends before the storm she cannot resist, diligently labors to foster the excellence she has produced, and at the source of human hope and fear tempers for our redemption the swelling attributes of one mighty to save. Thus, says Neander, "in the very beginning of the life of HIM who was to save the world, we see a foreshadowing of what it was afterwards to be. The believing souls, to whom the lofty import of that life was shown by divine signs, saw in it the fulfilment of their longings ; the power of the world, ever subservient to evil, raged against it ; but amid all dangers, the hand of God guided and brought it forth victorious."

From this general statement of the circumstances attendant on the early days of Christ on earth, let us proceed to remark that the suffering and toil into which he was plunged at so tender an age were adapted to develop his powers and fit him for the perfect accomplishment of the redemption he came to execute. The painful experience of his earliest struggles had the triple advantage of unfolding his energies, his sympathies, and his aspirations.

In the first place, as is the case with all redeemers, his best energies were developed by the worst trials. Christ assumed our nature, bore our sorrows, fought our battles, won our triumphs. He came to this tearful and stormful earth to live out in actual experience, from the first pang to the last, the spiritual sorrows and physical deprivations of all Adam's race. Monarch supreme in heaven, and regal on earth even by right of birth, he chose to appear in the most humble condition. For our sakes he became poor, and entered upon the conquest of the world without noticing either its honors or its emoluments. In the eye of the wealthy and powerful he was regarded only as



“the carpenter’s son.” The morning of his career dawned in the lowest vale of life, where he shared the sufferings of the most destitute, the wretched abode of cattle even, for there was no room for him and his associates at the inn. Such was the pomp in which the Deliverer of mankind appeared. The first acts of his divinity here below were struggles against want, and his destitution increased in proportion as his functions arose. The foxes had holes, and the fowls of the air had nests; but the Son of man had no reposing place for his head. Poor and toil-worn to the end, he earned all with his own hands, or received from charity the bread he ate, the garments he wore, and the winding-sheet in which he was entombed. Whoever has struggled with difficulties almost to strangling at the very outset of his heroic career, — whoever has toiled all day to win a scanty sustenance, and, in mental desolateness and gloom deeper than night, has shrieked in agony to the God of heaven, — whoever has cloaked his outward wants and inward aspirations beneath the humble mechanic’s garb, and gone forth, firm, silent, and resolute, learning the “priceless wisdom from endurance drawn” among his fellow-men, — whoever has mourned for “all the oppressions which are done under the sun,” and been “mad for the sight of his eyes that he did see,” — whoever has felt all the “wanderer in his soul,” and striven through the tender years of youth with sweating brow, blistered hands, and bleeding heart, to win the weapons of moral warfare, and cleave a way to self-emancipation and the disenthralment of all mankind, — let him come and hug to his bosom that brother of the poor and young champion of the weak; let him receive cheering words of fellow-feeling, and strength that shall never fail, from that Boy of Nazareth, the working Son of God. And in his intercourse with such an example of overcoming courage and patient efforts for the common weal, let him never despond, but remember

“He that is born is listed; life is war —  
Eternal war with woe.”

Early to task the energies of a predestined hero through severe toil is gradually to make him acquainted with his latent might, and causes him to taste the glory of his own puttings forth and triumphs. It is thus that personal power is quickened and kept in motion. All that is divine on earth must be developed and find expansive scope through resolute exertion. Of what use are wings to a young eagle so long as he sits in his eyry, looking out idly upon the vast expanse around him? Because the first flappings of those pinions are of necessity feeble, they are not therefore to be kept perpetually unemployed. Mere instinct teaches the parent bird better than this. He early induces his young to try his strength, and if he refuses, for lack of confidence, he pitches him out; and a few weeks of trials, constantly increased, constitute the glory and the joy of the young monarch of the air. Had he been moored in the dove's downy nest, his first flight would have sent him down dazzled before the rising day; but with strong plumes growing from within himself, and strengthened by struggles to surmount or penetrate opposing blasts, he wins and adorns the birthright of his race, darting to the zenith unblenched, and bathing himself in the splendors of the noon-tide sun. The very condition of one in this world of sin and sorrow — the obscurity in which we perish, or from which we are compelled to emerge — vicissitudes of every degree, and wants of every kind — every objective difficulty, and every subjective trial — all that can by any possibility be made to invigorate the body or arouse the mind — may be regarded as the compost out of which true heroism draws sap, acquires fibre, and imbibes the sustenance which aids the rising champion to disclose the hidden beauty of his spirit, the symmetry of his form, and the flexile majesty of his invincible strength. Says Cowper, truly, —

“No soil like poverty for growth divine,  
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.”

All our higher faculties gain infinitely more of purity and power by breathing in content the keen and wholesome air of

penury, than by all the enervating fumes which wealth can furnish through luxury and lust. The history of true greatness exhibits not a single model who did not from the first accustom himself to drink only from the well of homely life. Adversity, in exercising her power, loses her most offensive features, and develops in her victims their best strength. Said William Wallace to King Edward I., "Thou hast raised me among men. Without thy banners and cross-bows in array against me, I had sunk in utter forgetfulness. Thanks to thee for placing me, eternally, where no strength of mine could otherwise have borne me ! Thanks to thee for bathing my spirit in deep thoughts, in refreshing calm, in sacred stillness ! This, O king, is the bath for knighthood : after this it may feast, and hear bold and sweet voices, and mount to its repose." The best energies of the greatest men are never fully unfolded within and without except by the ordeal of severe struggles and malignant sufferings. Almost every champion who has won eminent influence among his fellows might adopt the motto of Rousseau : "I was born weak ; ill treatment has made me strong." They who "wander in the torrid climes of fame," the sons of beneficent genius, who are born to elevate the existence of the human race, must in the beginning shed many bitter sweat-drops, and give vent in solitude to many tear-steeped sighs. It is thus that the godlike is ever compelled to do penance for superabundant powers, and pay, with exhausting interest, the debt which he owes to suffering humanity. No great redeeming spirit appears on earth to be ministered unto, but to minister ; it is his highest prerogative and best reward to serve, to elevate, to bless. All wisdom that pertains to salvation is bought with labor and pain, and he who pants for the holiest truth and the highest power, will be indulged just so far as he climbs the rugged heights of tribulation with delight.

Lord Bacon compared virtue, or true manliness, to precious odors, "most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed ; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best

discover virtue." Here is a high truth ; but Jesus came, in the circumstances of his birth, in the toils and deprivations of his youth, to teach us a higher and a better. He would have us no longer leave, unperceived, or, if known, despised, the numerous examples of heroical poverty, which lie all around, and which should challenge the fostering sympathy of all mankind. Shrouded in obscurity and enduring neglect, still are they the choicest denizens of the earth, coming here to devote their lives to benevolence, sacrificing themselves to duty and the defence of justice in view of inevitable persecution, perhaps of prisons or the rack. O, what moral grandeur in such examples is exemplified, and what divine lessons do they teach. We almost hear each consecrated votary at the shrine of Eternal Righteousness exclaim from the depths of his soul, "Poverty may humble my lot, but it shall not debase me ; temptation may shake my nature, but not the rock on which thy temple is based ; misfortune may wither all the hopes that blossomed in the dewy morning of my life, but I will offer dead leaves when the flowers are no more. Though all the loved objects of earth perish, all that I have coveted fade away, I may groan under my burden, but I will never be recreant to duty, never disloyal to thee, O my God." Such resignation, suffering supported with so much constancy, was indeed noble, as seen, for instance, in the immolation of Socrates ; but how much more sublime in the youthful struggles of Jesus Christ ! What is there so exalted or divine "as a great and brave spirit working out its end through every earthly obstacle and evil ; watching through the utter darkness, and steadily defying the phantoms which crowd around it ; wrestling with the mighty allurements, and rejecting the fearful voice of that WANT which is the deadliest and surest of human tempters ; nursing through all calamity the love of the species, and the warmer and closer affections of private ties ; sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin ; and amid every horror and every humiliation, feeding the still and bright light of that genius, which, like the lamp of the fabulist, though it may

waste itself for years amidst the depths of solitude and the silence of the tomb, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed, when all around it is rottenness and decay?" But if it thrills every generous fibre of our nature to observe a fellow-creature thus toiling to be free and beneficent, what shall we think of that wonderful Being who deigned to assume humanity's woes, and struggle up from childhood through the most abject trials, that from the throne of heaven and the thrones of earth he might win the energies of almightiness to redeem mankind! It is indeed strange to see a Savior incarnate in a manger, and, from the first developments of youth, tied with base entanglements which, through all subsequent life, are destined to grow closer and closer, till death sets the intralld divinity free. But the sight is glorious and instructive as it is strange. It tells us that effort is the condition of growth; that he who came to be a matured and perfect Redeemer had first to perform the appropriate toils of a youthful God.

In the second place, the sympathies of the young Messiah were as effectually developed by the stern necessity of toil, as were the other elements of redeeming strength. Man's destiny is best achieved, and his most valuable fruit produced, through the agency of suffering. This is a great mystery, and would be stranger still, did we not see the fact exemplified in the purest man "that e'er wore flesh about him," and who, in all his career on earth, was the greatest of sufferers. Standing on the shore of that great sea of agony into which the Deliverer plunged to rescue a perishing race, we learn, through our own limited but bitter experience, that in the tumult and pressure of the profoundest billows of dark despair, God elaborated the sympathetic love, and gave to the world a tortured and bleeding heart, as the best symbol of its condition, and solace for its woe. As the unfathomed deep which unceasingly vibrates, the billows which forever moan, the waterspouts which fall back with crashing might upon the tempest that gave them birth, the lightnings that fringe cloud and billow, and the

thunders which shake the mighty main, may all be necessary to perfect the pearl lying in the obscurest coral depth, — so are the storms of life designed to develop in their gloom bright gems for the sunshine of heaven. Pliny tells us that the ring of Pyrrhus contained a jewel which had the figures of Apollo and all the Muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of nature, without any help from art. The youth of Christ was adorned with fairer features than any that belong to the loveliest productions of earth, but they were unfolded amid the severest exactions of sublunary toil. At an early age he was given up to the powers of darkness, to the end that, tempered in suffering, like a blade of steel in furnace flames and mountain torrents, he might become an irresistible sword to conquer the genius of evil and set humanity free. It was necessary that he should traverse “the vacant bosom’s wilderness,” and stand worn and desolate in “the leafless desert of the soul,” that he might sympathize with the great mass of our race, who are born in that condition, and in it are compelled to grow. “If misfortunes could be remedied by tears,” says Muretus, “tears would be purchased with gold. Misfortune does not call for tears, but counsel.” This advice, however, which is adapted at the same time to soothe and guide effectually, can originate only in a tenderly-experienced soul. “Few are the hearts whence one same touch bids the sweet fountain flow ;” but Christ was the chief of such, and was always ready to relieve the distressed, because from his tenderest years he had experienced their direst pangs. In every respect he was a model of moral excellence, possessing superlative worth ; and this superiority consisted not a little in the fact that, considered in his human qualities, his was one of those

“Souls that carry on a blest exchange  
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,  
And, with a fearless confidence, make known  
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,  
Daily desire increasing light and force  
From such communion in their pleasant course,  
Feel less their journey’s roughness, and its length,  
Meet their opposers with united strength,

And, one in heart, in interest, and design,  
Give up each other in the race divine."

The youthful days of our Savior were full of toil, such as is common to mankind; and this toil was adapted to develop his energies for the coming strife, and enlarge his sympathies for the suffering of every class. These are the points thus far considered. We would remark, thirdly, that in those early scenes of bitter experience, his aspirations were divine, and doubtless urged him with profounder ardor to break the fetters of the world. The Hebrew nations expected a Deliverer, and Micah had foretold that the promised king should be born in Bethlehem, the very place where the house of David had its origin. The Messiah appeared; but the lowly circumstances of his birth and youth were in striking contrast with his inherent dignity, and the glory it was supposed he would bring. That he should make his advent in the guise of a carpenter's son, and accustom himself to manual toil, instead of assuming at once the splendors of worldly dominion, rendered him, to the minions of priestly and regal power, the object of loathing and contempt. We must remember that Christ was all the while conscious of this; that, in the face of the upper and most oppressive circles, and in spite of their rage, he, from the beginning, chose to identify himself with the lowest rank of common people, share their burdens, sympathize with their sorrows, and aspire to deliver them from all their wrongs. In the midst of the most menial pursuits, he fostered the sublimest purposes of soul; in "clear dream and solemn vision" he contemplated the auspicious destinies of the human race, and, in view of what his own almighty hand should, at the proper time, perform, labored on in patient thoughtfulness, lifting his young brow ever and anon toward heaven, to "hail the coming on of time." Let the youth, whose divine aspirations chafe against the chill impediments of earthly want and depressing toil, contemplate the history of the great pattern, and be content to

"Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,  
And snap the chain the moment when he may."

The fallen race of Adam have an Advocate who ever lives to make intercession in their behalf; one who was thrust out from the houses of the rich and powerful here below, that he might prepare for outcasts mansions of glory on high; one who graced the mechanic's shop, and sweat great drops of agony on the barren earth, ere he broke his mighty heart on the cross, and ascended in triumph to the mediatorial throne. He was humanity's worker before he was humanity's Savior. His experience in the flesh spread out his sympathies from the lowest to the highest, prompted him to break down all hinderances to personal freedom, and, by both precept and example, encouraged pure aspirations in every breast. There is vast significance in his command, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Because Christ had himself been a child, he knew to what sublime height the thoughts of children, the most obscure, may rise.

So abjectly subject to sin and the slavery of grovelling habits is man, that he needs some one who has not partaken of the fall to stand by his side at every step, and with divine earnestness to tell him how much he is yet able to perform, despite the degradation he has incurred. The world of youth needs the example of that sinless one, whose every action and appearance are designed to disclose how that we should put forth all the divinity of deed, of attitude, and of expression, of which our immortal nature is capable. He demonstrated that all fortune can be conquered by bearing it; and no more valuable lesson can, by the young, be learned. Every soul has its bright visions, as well as its sombre; but, unfortunately, in this uncongenial world, it is the better aspirations that we are least disposed to indulge. "The vision and the faculty divine" is greatly obscured, because its exercise is but little encouraged by our associates. Each one may have his own occasional gleams of exalted things, but he will be little inclined to contemplate the revelations made to others. The world is less disposed to recognize our sincerity, when delineating the gor-



geous heights of celestial achievements which, in meditation, we have seen, than when detailing those loathsome phantasies in which the best of depraved beings sometimes revel. Thus the frigid multitude without forces us to be hypocrites, when we have the strongest disposition to be sincere in the best pursuit, and to assume a supineness and meagreness which ill correspond to the height, and depth, and lavish variety, of the inner man, in its spontaneous efforts to expand and soar. But Jesus most acutely experienced "the reachings of our souls," and made provision for their freest and widest flight. Impelled by divinest aspirations, he would have us mount to the starry gates of God's dwelling in the skies, and drink into our panting souls, with unutterable ravishment, broad and clear beamings of his mysterious splendor, and then, in our generous warmth, he would have us hasten to distribute among our brethren the glad and sanctifying beams with which we are imbued. If they spurn our gift, depreciate its value, deny even its existence, and question our capacity to attain views so blissful, he would not have us chilled into despair by the captiousness we incur, but hold on our way in patient effort, till Omnipotence comes to crown with success our beneficent design.

Says Neander, "There was peculiar fitness in Christ's being born among the Jewish people. His life revealed the *kingdom of God*, which was to be set up over all men; and it properly commenced in a nation whose political life, always developed in a theocratic form, was the continued type of that kingdom. He was the culminating point of this development; in him the kingdom of God, no longer limited to this single people, was to show its true design, and, unfettered by physical or national restraints, to assert its authority over the whole human race. The particular typifies the universal; the earthly the celestial. So David, the monarch who had raised the political theocracy of Jesus to the pinnacle of glory, typified that greater Monarch, in whom the kingdom of God was to display its glory. Not without reason, therefore, was it that Christ, the summit of the theocracy, sprang from the fallen line of royal David."

And yet, what is remarkable in the youth of Christ, he never fortified his claims to popular regard by allusions to an illustrious ancestry, and his origin from royal blood. On the contrary, he avoided courting the favor of the worldly great, refused to meddle with every thing connected with oppressive sovereignty, and preferred the humblest position among the masses, at once their symbol, their champion, and friend. The beautiful spirit of young Christ, rising from the people and shining on them all,

“Looked down on earth’s distinctions, high and low,  
Sunken or soaring, as the equal sun  
Sheds light along the vale and mountain’s brow.”

Great and beneficent souls always rise from the general mass and belong to it. They spring from the industrious ranks, diffuse the principles of equality, bind the great elements of society together, and ennoble them. They inspire fresh thoughts, execute generous deeds, and transmit the grandest influence to the end of time. Such, in a preëminent degree, was the case with the “child Jesus.” Though he was in character divine and of exalted birth, he claimed no immunities on account of these considerations, but, from the lowest grade of rational existence, dared to aspire to the highest, and win the most glorious attitude by his own sufferings and toil. He was not educated in a learned school, nor sustained by any favorable combination of clique and circumstance. “He was obliged to contend with poverty, lowness, and contempt, and was surrounded with obstacles, difficulties, and dangers, which seemed invincible. In his obscure and helpless condition, however, we find him capable of forming a plan for the good of all nations, and cherishing a thought which lay beyond the reach of human intellect, though possessed of the greatest powers, and exercised under the most favorable circumstances. We find him capable of making a bold effort to carry it into execution, and indulging a hope that all would be accomplished, never firmer than in the moment when to human view all was lost; when he was forsaken by his intimate friends,

opposed and even put to death by his nation. What conclusion must we draw from a phenomenon so distinct in its kind? Shall we not be justified in *considering him the most exalted sage, the greatest benefactor of mankind, a most credible messenger of the Godhead?* ”

The aspirations of our Lord in his early youth, their intensity and lofty aim, are indicated by the circumstances of a well-known event, concerning which the profoundest of modern commentators remarks as follows:—

“Of the early history of Jesus we have only a single incident; but that incident strikingly illustrates the manner in which the consciousness of his divine nature developed itself in the mind of the child. Jesus had attained his twelfth year, a period which was regarded among the Jews as the dividing line between childhood and youth, and at which regular religious instruction and the study of the law were generally entered upon. For that reason, his parents, who were accustomed to visit Jerusalem annually at the time of the Passover, took him with them for the first time. When the feast was over, and they were setting out on their return, they missed their son. This, however, does not seem to have alarmed them, and perhaps he was accustomed to remain with certain kindred families or friends. Indeed, we are told (Luke ii. 44) that they expected to find him ‘in the company,’ at the evening halt of the caravan. Disappointed in this expectation, they returned the next morning to Jerusalem, and, on the following day, found him in the synagogue of the temple, among the priests, who had been led by his questions into a conversation on points of faith. His parents reproached him for the uneasiness he had caused them, and he replied, ‘*Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?*’ Now, these words of Jesus contain no explanation, beyond his tender years, of the relations which he sustained to the Father; they manifest simply the consciousness of a child,—a depth, to be sure, but yet only a depth of presentiment.

“We can draw various important inferences from this inci-

dent in the early life of Christ. At a tender age he studied the Old Testament, and obtained a better knowledge of its religious value by the light that was within him than any human instruction could have imparted. Nor was this beaming forth of an immediate consciousness of divine things in the mind of the child, in advance of the development of his powers of discursive reason, at all alien to the character and progress of human nature, but entirely in harmony with it. Nor need we wonder that the infinite riches of the hidden spiritual life of the child first manifested themselves to his consciousness, as if suggested by his conversation with the doctors, and that his direct intuitions of divine truth, the flashes of spiritual light that emanated from him, amazed the masters in Israel. It not unfrequently happens, in our human life, that the questions of others are thus *suggestive* to great minds, and, like steel upon the flint, draw forth their inner light, at the same time revealing to their own souls the unknown treasures that lay in their hidden depths. But they give more than they receive; the outward suggestion only excites to action their creative energy; and men of reflective and receptive, rather than creative, minds, by inciting the latter to know and develop their vast resources, may not only learn much from their utterance, but also diffuse the streams which gush with overflowing fulness from these abundant well-springs. And these remarks, applying—in a sense in which they apply to no other—to that mind, lofty beyond all human comparison, whose creative thoughts are to fertilize the spiritual life of man through all ages, and whose creative power sprang from its mysterious union with that Divine Word which gave birth to all things, show us that his consciousness developed itself gradually, and in perfect accordance with the laws of human life, from that mysterious union which formed its ground.

“And further, without in the least attempting to do away with the peculiar form of the *child's* spiritual life, we can recognize in this incident a dawning sense of his divine mission in the mind of Jesus; a sense, however, not yet unfolded

in the form in which the corruption of the world, objectively presented, alone could occasion its development. The child found congenial occupation in the things of God ; in the Temple he was at home. And, on the other hand, we see an opening consciousness of the peculiar relation in which he stood to the Father as the Son of God. We delight to find, in the early lives of eminent men, some glimpses of the future, some indications of their after greatness ; so we gladly recognize, in the pregnant words of the child, a foreshadowing of what is afterwards so fully revealed to us in the discourses of the completely-manifested Christ, especially as they are given to us in John's Gospel."

The history of rising worth has nothing to compare with that temple scene. A youth appears "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." He comes into the assembly of venerable sages with a mild and pensive countenance, that seems haunted with earnest thought. He is no favorite of earthly fortune, no scion of aristocratic pride, no pet of exclusive schools, but the simple child of the unsophisticated people, steeped to the lips in suffering ; and yet, mightier than the domes that bend above him, he is for the intellect and heart of man a glorious living temple, built with the choicest riches of unnumbered worlds. The first question he propounds startles the attention of all who hear him, and creates the greatest astonishment in the most profound ; for his words bear that charm of immaculate wisdom which can neither be defaced nor excelled. Question succeeds to question, and learning, in despair, grows more and more confused, in this, the grandest gladiatorship of mind yet witnessed on earth. Sage after sage, swelling with wounded pride, is silenced before that youth appalled in the plain attire of peasant life, radiant with the celestial light that emanates from an aspiring heart, and bent on throwing wide open the gates of instruction to all. The whole park of artillery which power and craft have erected on their contracted citadels he

has spiked, and, like "a mailed angel on a battle day," he rejoices in his triumph, not for himself, but for the sake of the benighted multitudes around. *Free thought and free discussion then and there were born!*

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE MANHOOD OF CHRIST.

IN MATURITY, TRAINED BY SUFFERINGS SUCH AS MANKIND IN GENERAL  
ARE DOOMED TO ENDURE.

It is important that we keep constantly in view the relation which the progressive development of Christ's manhood bore to the complete accomplishment of his divine mission, The years of his life which were most veiled in obscurity were full of preparatory discipline, wisely adapted to the sublimest ends. The lowly circumstances of his infancy, the severe toils of his youth, and the varied experience of his early manhood, were doubtless designed gradually to awaken the full consciousness of that divine call, and fortify him with that perfect mastery over adverse powers, which he displayed on entering upon his public life. From an infinite diversity of sources, sublunary and celestial, Jesus imbibed energies of every kind, which, with irresistible concentrativeness, were at length employed to redeem and renovate the world. To the silent, solitary preparation which transpired in the life of Christ between the ages of twelve and thirty, let us now attend.

In examining this period of transition from youthful consecration to perpetual struggle and triumphant sacrifice, we shall find that our Redeemer experienced much of social oppression, personal self-reliance, and the seductions of power.

In the first place, Jesus Christ experienced much of the

bitterness produced by social oppression. Suffering humanity drank from no cup and experienced no wrongs in which he did not participate. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet sinless. He knew no actual participation of depravity; but, as he rose from the lowest vale of human existence, and pressed through every barrier that sin has raised, he learned how to sympathize with a fallen race in every pang they endured. This was essential to the full development of the Messianic character, and the perfect discharge of the work he came to perform. He entered upon various human relationships, mingled intimately with human beings of every class, and witnessed human wretchedness of every degree. That which he saw, felt, and wept over, made profound impressions on his mighty heart, and nerved him, amid the tempest of vicarious woe, to win peace for mankind.

Jesus, in common with nearly all who are born to elevate and bless the world, was disparaged by those who had the best evidences of his worth, and found least encouragement from the kindred to whom he was most closely allied. Various statements of the evangelists inform us that Christ had younger brothers and sisters. For instance, they who witnessed the first marvels of his career said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Simon, and Juda? and are not his sisters here with us?" A distinguished critic observes, —

"It is worthy of note that Mark and John agree in stating that these brothers of the Savior remained unbelievers during his stay on earth — a fact which illustrates the truthfulness of the history, since it by no means tended to glorify either Christ or his brothers, one of whom, at least, (James,) was in high repute among the Jewish Christians. It is not to be wondered at that the prophet was without honor among those who dwelt under the same roof, and saw him grow up under the same laws of ordinary human nature with themselves. True, this daily contact afforded them many opportunities of beholding the Divinity that streamed through the veil of his flesh; yet it

required a spiritual mind and a lively faith to recognize the revealed Son of God in the lowly garb of humanity. The impression of humanity made upon their *senses* day after day, and thus grown into a habit, could not be made to yield to the divine manifestations, unless in longer time than was required for others; but when it *did* yield, and, after such long-continued opposition, they acknowledged their brother as the Son of God and the Messiah, they only became thereby the more trustworthy witnesses."

The whole life of Christ on earth was tragical in the highest degree; the portions which were most obscure, not less so than the scenes on Calvary and Olivet. Think of the desolateness of that preparatory state, wherein his own kindred discarded his claims, and oppressed him with all the chilling weight of undisguised distrust. Nothing is sublimer in the history of mind than the lonely struggles which precede and generate success. Every predestined hero will have to demonstrate his superior worth by encountering and overcoming the most undeserved obstructions. Long before an effective foothold is attained, he will have suffered most from unexpected quarters, and been more aroused by neglect than by timely aid. Misfortune is a fire that melts weak hearts, but renders the firm purer and stronger. How many of the best of our race can recognize their model and consolation in the unfriended youth of Nazareth! Let the young man compelled to struggle with that sorest destiny, relatives who foster not but rather congeal his warmest hopes, take heart from the experience of his Lord, homeless and brotherless among his own kindred, but yet on his way to the conquest of popular prejudice, the redemption of degraded humanity, and the possession of power the most comprehensive and supreme.

How merciful was God to the best desires of the best hearts, to portray before the world the discipline of toil and neglect which his beloved Son endured! Alas for the nobly aspiring, if they derive not more solace from this heavenly example than can be found in the selfishness of earth! In every age,



oppressive sceptres and galling chains have been broken by youthful hands nerved by wrongs, "as the rock shivers in the thunder stroke;" and in almost every instance these saviors, like their great Pattern, have been inured for the strife by the contempt or envy which at the outset they incurred. They arose in the field or shop, panting to be useful, and demanding only the patronage of good will and a fair opportunity to exercise their gifts. Some have contemptuously glanced at the lowly condition of such, saying, "Can any good thing come out of sources so obscure?" and have done what they could to depress the native talents with which they are too ignoble to sympathize. But when the wealthy and powerful of earth discard all claims on their regard proffered by the indigent candidate for usefulness and the highest fame, how sweet to turn to Christ for sympathy and support! How easy of access is he! How grateful to walk with him in the dusty path of hard endeavor, and spread before his generous heart our own benevolent and comprehensive schemes, when all others are distant and deaf—him, my fellow-mechanic, brother sufferer, kindred student, friend, teacher, God!

At an early day, the great Deliverer began to look out from the centre of his own domestic circle through all the ramifications of the human race, and saw that injustice and oppression every where prevailed. His keen experience of this set in operation his superhuman energies to defend the feeble and demolish the strong. He won a mastership over injustice even while suffering it, and through the paths of distress ascended to the highest triumphs and the best repose. Hence he exclaimed to those who would tread in his footsteps and emulate his deeds, "In the world ye will be oppressed; but be of good courage, I have conquered the world." In a manner full of light and encouragement, he has taught the champions of righteousness that it is their doom and reward to endure much that is oppressive, in order that they may the better know how to appreciate the invulnerable nature within man, which may be abused but cannot be destroyed. Providence has armed

the mind with a quality which lies at the foundation of many excellences, and supports them all. This is fortitude which, by throwing a spirit of graceful endurance into every mental energy, gives beauty to grandeur, and tranquillity to zeal. Much is this quality needed, since

“In this wild world the fondest and the best  
Are the most tried, most troubled, and distressed.”

In addition to the bestowal of fortitude as a prime element of the soul, there is a fact connected with its exercise which claims our gratitude. It is, that when the victim has endured his appointed suffering with unflinching heroism, and when vanquished fortune is compelled herself to admire, he is always the admiration of the world, as well as its greatest benefit. There is a potency in the daring heart of the resolute, to which even destiny must yield. Let us remember that, as the most beautiful roses bloom in dreary Lapland, as the richest diamonds are found on the stormiest coasts, and as porphyry hardens the more it is exposed to the elements, so the best virtues of the soul are generally disciplined by the sternest trials.

This truth has been felt and enforced by all who have excelled in every age. Zeno taught it in the severe philosophy of the Porch; and the artist who gave to fame the wonderful group of Laocoon felt this sentiment deeply, as he sculptured colossal agony in marble, and transmitted to succeeding generations that sublime representation of an heroic spirit struggling in the serpent-coils that would cripple his benevolence, and yet not altogether overcome by his pangs. The great father of tragedy imbodyed this idea in his masterpiece, when, in Prometheus bound, he demonstrated that neither the shaking earth, nor the rending heavens, a bed of rock without, nor vulture fangs within, could cause regret for good deeds already done, or terror in view of evil yet to be inflicted. Filled with fortitude based on conscious merit, the torn victim, even amid his most cruel tortures, would not stoop so low as to be envious

towards the dishonorable prosperity of Mercury, his tyrannical foe. Although so borne down with sufferings that naked existence, alone remained to him, still the sweets of benevolence and the balm of heavenly courage flow in each pulsation of the throbbing heart through all the avenues of tortured life. Marius, seated among the ruins of Carthage, was the impersonation of heroic endurance, and a striking exemplification of this inherent power of the manly mind. The shattered and prostrate city was a type of the fallen fortunes of the conqueror; but the contrast between the soul unbent, the hero undaunted, and the surrounding mass of ruins, presents in a striking aspect that element of indomitable power which forever glows in the brave of soul. But Christ came, the mighty architect of all things majestic and fair, to reconstruct with pristine glory a world far gone in moral decay. His object was not only to suffer in our stead, but to teach us by example how superior to suffering mind can be made. Every event of his life, and every phase of his sorrow, inward struggles and outward obstructions, are full of meaning for us, and for all persons who have sensibilities to be crushed or hardships to endure. Especially should they who have to do with the young and the unfortunate recognize the latent germs of worth and capacity which the Almighty has deposited in every human soul. This was what Christ was most prompt to do, the mighty achievement which he alone could effectually perform. At the moment when all the earth groaned with longings for deliverance, a voice arose in Judea, the voice of Him who came to suffer and to die for his brethren, proclaiming the dawn of freedom for every land, solace for every woe. This was the carpenter's son, poor, persecuted, forsaken, who cried to the multitudes crushed beneath the burdens of depravity and toil, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To heal the evils which afflict our race, he assumed their condition, on their behalf met every claim of infinite justice, and opened the fountains of redemption and charity freely to all mankind.

Men every where became manageable under the eye and the moulding hand of Christ, because, in addition to the native divinity of his character, the depth and variety of his human experience enabled him to get close to them — closely in contact with their inmost selves. He did not spin about him an impervious web of conventional prejudices and feelings, which protected his tender soul from the touch of ordinary bystanders. The beings and vicissitudes with which he came in contact day by day and hour by hour, touched the innermost and tenderest fibres of his being. He thus learned to sway the masses, because he could draw them with the cords of a man. The winding passages to the human heart he had critically scanned, and all its trembling sensibilities he had felt; hence, through the outer sanctuary, into the very presence of the most hidden spirit, he could advance at once, holding the object of his mercy spell-bound by his tones and the first glance of his eye, because that eye moistened with sympathy for the suffering, and there were tears in his voice which no degree of obduracy could resist. But what was the educational process preparatory to a mission so divine? How were results so grand and beneficent attained?

This leads us to remark that Jesus experienced much of personal self-reliance. His education was not professional, but personal; it was self-development, in the most free and unlimited degree. Neander has profoundly explored this topic, and on it remarks, —

“ We have already seen that in the early progress of the mind of Christ every thing was original and direct, and that external occasions were needed only to bring out his inward activity. As we must suppose that his development was subsequently continued in the same way, we come at once to the conclusion that his education for a teacher was not due to any of the theological schools then existing in Judea. But we can reach this conclusion only by comparing the peculiar tendencies of those schools with the aims of Christ, with his mode of life and instruction, and with the spirit which he diffused

around him. In the outset, how unlike Christ was the legal spirit of Pharisaism, with its soul-crushing statutes, its dead theology of the letter, and its barren subtleties! Some few of the sect, endowed with a more earnest religious sense, and a more sincere love of truth than their fellows, could not resist the impression of Christ's divine manifestation; but they came to him with a full knowledge of the difference between his mode of teaching and theirs, and not as to a teacher sprung from among themselves. They had first to overcome their surprise at his strange and extraordinary language, before they could enter into closer connection with him. They had to renounce the wisdom of their schools, to disclaim their legal righteousness, and to attach themselves to Christ with the same sense of deficiency in themselves, and with the same desire for what he alone could impart, as all other men.

“The spirit of the Sadducees presents a still more rugged contrast to the spirit of Christ. Their schools agreed in nothing but denying; their only bond of union was opposition to the Pharisees, against whom they strove to reëstablish the original Hebraism, freed from the foreign elements which the Pharisaic statutes had mixed up with it. But an agreement in negation can be only an apparent one, if the negation rests upon an opposite positive principle. Thus certain negative doctrines, that agree with Protestantism in rejecting the authority and traditions of the Romish church, separate themselves farther from Protestantism than the Romish doctrine itself, by the affirmative principle on which they rest their denial, and by carrying that denial too far. The single positive principle of Sadduceeism was the one-sided prominence given by them to morality, which they separated from its necessary inward union with religion. But Christ's combat with the Pharisees arose out of the fullest interpenetration of the moral and religious elements. The Sadducees wished to cut off the progressive development of Hebraism at an arbitrary point. They refused to recognize the growing consciousness of God, which, derived from the Mosaic institute, formed

a substantial feature of Judaism, and hence could not comprehend the higher religious element from which, as a germ, under successive divine revelations, the spiritual life of Judaism was to be gradually developed. Rejecting all such growth as foreign and false, they held a subordinate and isolated point to be absolute and perpetual; adhering to the letter rather than the spirit. To the forced allegorizing of the Pharisees in interpreting the Scripture they opposed a slavishly literal and narrow exegesis. But Christ, on the other hand, while he rejected the Pharisaic traditions, received into his doctrine all the riches of divine knowledge which the progressive growth of Theism, up to the time of John the Baptist, had brought forth. His agreement, then, with the Sadducees, consisting, as it did, solely in opposition to Pharisaism, was merely negative and apparent.

“Had the source of Christ’s mighty power been merely a doctrine, it might have been received, or at least suggested, from abroad. But his power lay in the impression which his manifestation and life as the Incarnate God produced; and this could never have been derived from without. The peculiar import of his doctrine, as such, consists in its relation to himself as a part of his self-revelation, and image of his unoriginated and inherent life; and this alone suffices to defy all attempts at external explanation. Had Jesus been trained in the Jewish seminaries, his opponents would, doubtless, have reproached him with the arrogance of setting up for master where he himself had been a pupil. But, on the contrary, we find that they censured him for attempting to explain the Scriptures without having enjoyed the advantages of the schools, (John 7: 15.) His first appearance as a teacher in the synagogue at Nazareth carried even greater surprise, as he was known there, not as one learned in the law, but rather as a carpenter’s son, who had, perhaps, himself worked at his father’s trade. The general impression of his discourses every where was, that they contained totally different materials from those furnished by the theological schools. (Matt. 7: 29.)”

One of the most striking features of Christ's education was the purity, strength, and copiousness of his affections. From the aristocracies of the age, in both church and state, he was isolated and contradistinguished; but to his sisters, to children, and to all spirits not dwarfed by bigotry and degraded by passion, he was ever closely allied. He first breathed on the breast of a virgin, and perpetually grew in intimate contact with the great heart of humanity, throbbing in the bosom of unsophisticated life. He came to uprear love's standard upon the battlements of truth; and he won his best preparation for the task, not in the contracted and desiccative influence of polemical warfare, but amid the expanding and ennobling tendencies which prevail where "glides the calm current of domestic joy."

Speaking of a great master of American theology, a distinguished professor at Andover recently remarked, —

"We cannot help wishing that he had been somewhat more of a brother, and somewhat less of a champion; that he had left his book on the Will just as large as it is, but had made his book on the Affections and sentiments more comprehensive and full; that he had been a little more like one on whose bosom we might lean our heads at a supper, and a little less like one standing in the gloom of solitude, and awing down every weakness of our poor nature. We need and crave a theology as sacred and spiritual as his, and moreover one that we can take with us into the flower-garden, and to the top of some goodly hill, and in a sail over a tasteful lake, and into the saloons of music, and to the galleries of the painter and the sculptor, and to the repasts of social joy, and to all those humanizing scenes where Virtue holds her sway, not merely as that generic and abstract duty of a 'love to being in general,' but also as the more familiar grace of a love to some beings in particular. We do want a theology that will not frown with too great austerity on every playful sentiment, nor disdain all communion with those things which hard-nerved men call 'innocent follies,' but which were designed by Him who

remembereth our frame to make the intellect more pliant and versatile, and the manners more polished, and the whole man more human. Many of our systematic treatises on theology have been written in schools, and garrets, and cloisters, and prisons ; some of them by men bearing the title of ‘ bachelors in divinity,’ and the character of bachelor in humanity also ; but these treatises would have been more exactly true, had they been composed amid the scenes of a more sympathizing and social life, and by men not so ‘ intensely married to their folios and parchments.’ Much of our theology has been hammered out by metaphysicians ; and we all know what Burke says of these men — ‘ There is no heart so hard as that of a thorough-bred metaphysician.’ ”

Christ was the divinest of theologians, because he taught not in abstraction, but exemplification ; not in dogmas merely, but deeds ; in the ardor of his heart, as well as the energy of his mind ; in the gentleness of his demeanor and the beneficent industry of his life. The love of the beautiful, the good, and the true, were a trinity in his soul, never mutilated, smothered, or divorced. From the earliest youth he so deepened and refined the sentiment of the beautiful, that he could not be otherwise than good ; and he so deepened and refined the sentiment of the good, that it was impossible for him to be otherwise than true. He chose this order and condition of development here below, that he might prepare for earth that which earth most needs — men and women in whom the beautiful, the good, and the true, may be one, harmonious, and divine, causing their hearts instinctively to soar toward heaven whenever they behold the flowers of the field, the stars in the firmament, and, with purer vision still, gaze on angels round the eternal throne.

Christ assumed our humanity, and rendered it intensely human, that it might become divine. He did not isolate it, nor associate it more closely with the exclusive few ; he socialized it — blended it intimately with the great masses, knowing that every development of our social nature tends toward the



development of our religious emotions. Absolute solitude is unnatural to mankind. It is unfavorable to the profoundest meditation, and suicidal to all that is elevated and comprehensive in the unfolding of our powers. Man is not by nature an ascetic, sown by hazard on earth, to live and die in the hidden shadow of a rock or forest; he is born in the midst of society, which adopts him, nourishes him, trains him, communicates to him its ideas, its passions, vices, virtues, and to which in turn he leaves, with his dust and memory, the influences of his own life. In humanity every thing which is true of the individual is true of the race; and whatever is true of all was designed to be concentrated in each for his improvement, enjoyment, and safeguard. Our fellow-men are our fellow-men in all respects; and Christ, who through his incarnation obtained the truest knowledge of our condition, by the most perfect experience of our wants, felt the most profoundly that human nature admits of no privileges; that in distributing the two richest treasures we can possess — freedom and truth — partiality is a crime. Hence the first thing the Redeemer did, was to recognize and fortify the great and holy law of mutuality, of reciprocity, in every worthy deed. Who better than he could perceive that beings endowed with passions and affections are necessarily dependent upon and responsible to each other? A distinguished follower of his taught that the obligation of brotherly love among men is a debt from which we are never absolved or acquitted, saying, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” But the great Master had long before inculcated this law by his example, when, disowned by his brethren according to the flesh, and discarded by the worldly great, he was compelled to rely on his own resources, and illuminated the retired but social sphere of his development with the torch of love, calm and majestic, like “the waveless ocean in its noontide slumbers.”

The chief design of Christianity is, to create in its subjects a new life, and to accelerate their spiritual progress. That this may be accomplished with the greatest certainty and widest

success, a minor motive is, to develop and refine social ties, that through these others may be wooed into companionship by the way, and a participation of the final reward. Therefore its Founder, though superhuman, did not wish to appear as a giant, least of all a solitary one, lest the multitude of ordinary mortals should be alarmed at his height, and shudder before him as a monster. He first taught that family life, social spirit, patriotism, universal brotherhood, or by whatever name the law of reciprocity may be designated, all spring from the existence of our affections, which indissolubly bind our fates to those of our fellow-men; that intellectual, or moral, or religious solitude is impossible so long as love is exercised; and that without the development of this, the best portion of our nature, perfection can never be attained. Therefore all the superstitious admiration ever felt for the life of anchorites, so far from being the legitimate product of true religion, is directly opposed to it. Hermits are monsters, inasmuch as they adopt a mode of life in conflict with the nature of man, and in every respect injurious to his healthy growth. Nothing but the corruption and impiety of the times can justify a solitary life; and even this is not a sufficient excuse, according to the apostle Paul: "I wrote to you in an epistle not to company with fornicators; yet not altogether [to break all intercourse] with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." One of the most attractive features in the character and life of Christ, is this early and unbounded development of his social nature under circumstances which were apparently so adverse. He may have been neglected by others, but he neglected none. His birth was so low, and his preparatory career so obscure, that the great and influential of earth found themselves incapable of stooping to foster his worth; but he who was greater and mightier than all, voluntarily assumed that position, not for the purpose of dragging any down, but for raising all up. Kings, princes, and priests; Sadducee, Pharisee, and Essene; all sects, orthodox and het-

erodox, may have striven equally to make their respective adherents bow and mould themselves to their own creed ; but he, the lowly and loving man of the people, the Son of God, the Son of man, every where and in every condition, would let his mighty heart swell under a prostrate and abused race, that he might raise them above oppression, by imparting to the soul a power and a deliverance which sectarianism and tyranny can never wrest from its grasp. As Christ moved about from scene to scene where the great masses antagonized with penury and wrong, drudging through long periods of unproductive toil, that a few might riot in luxurious ease, and gathering at remote intervals a few gleams of home-joy, while their oppressors wasted their whole lives in riotous delights, it is easy to see how he constantly yearned to be their Redeemer, and to make other redeemers ; to spread far and wide ideas and emotions fitted to make men divine ; to undergo all privation, peril, and pain ; to love where he was hated, and to die that humanity might live, in loyalty to the widest affection and the highest truth. Hence has generation after generation been disinthralled and beautified, blessed with patriots, sages, martyrs, prophets, and apostles, men facing the dungeon, the sword, and the flame, rather than desert their allegiance to the best interests of the greatest number. This was indeed God manifest in the flesh — a Deity full of justice, wisdom, and benevolence ; who passed from heaven to earth, that he might raise earth to heaven ; who adopted our shape and carried our sorrows, that he might comprehend us better, compassionate more benignly our infirmities, and vindicate us without defeat when tortured by the evils which in this bad world we cannot escape. It is this intense humanness of the Savior, as well as his divinity, which gives to his religion its ineffable gentleness and irresistible power.

But if the necessity of self-reliance occasioned the thorough and comprehensive development of Christ's sensibilities, it had an equally beneficial influence on his intellect. In some respects, the early training of the Old Testament prophets and

that of the great Prophet of the New, were similar ; but in most particulars the contrast was very great.

“The most extraordinary beings, as imaginative objects, who ever appeared upon this planet, were the prophet-bards of Israel. Mark one of those wondrous beings, in his most perfect character ! He was a solitary and savage man, residing with lions, when he was not waylaying kings, on whose brow the scorching sun of Syria had characterized its fierce and terrible hue ; and whose wild eye swam with a fierce insanity, gathered from solitary communings with the original forms of nature ; the sand, the sea, the mountains, and the sky ; as well as with the divine afflatus. He had lain in the cockatrice’s den ; he had put his hand on the hole of the asp ; he had spent the night on lion-surrounded trees, and slept and dreamed amid their hungry roar ; he had swum in the Dead Sea, or haunted, like a ghost, those dreary caves which lowered around it ; he had drank of the melted snow on the top of Lebanon ; at Sinai he had traced and trode on the burning footprints of Jehovah ; he had heard messages at midnight, which made his hair to arise and his skin to creep ; he had been wet with dews of the night, and girt by the demons of the wilderness ; he had been tossed up and down like a leaf upon the strong and awful storm of his inspiration. He was essentially a lonely man, cut off, by gulf upon gulf, from all tender ties and human associations. He had no home ; a wife he might be permitted to marry, but the permission, as to Hosea, might only be a curse ; and, when her death became necessary, as a sign, as in the case of Ezekiel, she died and left him in the same austere seclusion in which he had existed before. The power which came upon him, cut, by its fierce coming, all the threads which bound him to his kind, tore him from the plough or from the pastoral solitude, and hurried him to the desert, and thence to the foot of the throne, or to the wheel of the triumphal chariot. And how startling his coming to crowned or conquering guilt ! Wild from the wilderness, bearded like its lion lord, the fury of God glaring in his eye, his mantle heaving to his

heaving breast ; his words stern, swelling, tinged on their terrible edges with poetry ; his attitude, dignity ; his gesture, power ; how did he burst upon the astonished gaze, how abrupt and awful his entrance, how short and spirit-like his stay ; how dreamily dreadful the impression made by his words, long after they had ceased to tingle on the ears, and how mysterious the solitude into which he seemed to melt away ! Poet, nay, prophet, were a feeble name for such a being. He was a trumpet filled with the voice of God ; a chariot of fire carrying blazing tidings ; a meteor kindled at the eye, and blown on the breath of the Eternal ! ”

The above sketch may be true respecting the heralds of the ancient theocracy, but it does not apply to the Founder of a newer and better dispensation. He was diviner than they — had more character, and therefore was habitually more majestic and calm. He was equally private in his habits of life, was even more conversant with nature than his predecessors on the heights of inspiration ; but he was imbued with Deity more than any man — relied incessantly on himself for augmented force, and exerted the greatest public energy, for the very reason, probably, that he threw abroad his heavenly grandeur from the shadows of the most humble sphere. It was this retired, calm, and truly godlike self-unfolding of our Redeemer that shed an epic splendor around every step of his progress, made each injury he suffered a solace to emulative disciples on his track, and every act he performed a symbol most significant of truth and freedom to all mankind.

We have seen how our Lord early relied on resources native to himself, and arose superior to the religious dogmas of the day, as they were taught by all the popular theological schools. At the outset, oppressed as he was by toil and exclusiveness, he strove to stand forth the first among our race, an independent thinker, struggling for the suffering of every class, with head, hands, and heart disinthralled. Mankind yearned for the advent of one in whom the love of the beautiful, the pursuit of the good, and the defence of the true, would not be

a mere artistic perception, but a natural and ardent passion, such as in Christ only is realized. He best served the salvation of humanity by the peculiar education of himself as an individual. When he had once made the beautiful, the good, and the true, an harmonious unity for himself, the divine example of this unity became a more resistless argument to his sympathetic brethren than all the eloquence that man or angel could employ. He broke away from sectarian despotism, and aspired to become thoroughly and energetically individual in the purity and power of his own light, that he might excite kindred aspirations in all other individuals; and, for their encouragement, while his own person was yet sombre in the lowest vale, he poured the dawn of universal deliverance along every summit of the world. All that was needed to make him a tender friend, a perfect teacher, and a mighty Redeemer, he acquired by experience on earth, and transmitted for its hope. He had the same faith in himself as in his doctrine; and feeling that both were divine, he was more than willing — it was his only ambition and delight — to lay them at the feet of every man. He would transform each immortal creature of our race not only into a disciple, but a prophet, placing in his heart a sublime idea, a celestial sentiment, which he should profoundly feel was destined to redeem the world. With a modest but majestic self-reliance, he shrank from no peril, no pain, no obloquy, that he might accomplish the advocacy of mercy and truth in word and deed. He went abroad, armed with no exclusiveness and no coercion, but radiant with the energies and beatitudes of a salvation designed to bless all nations, free, purify, and exalt all mankind.

The mental independence so prominent in Christ is a rare thing on earth, and most worthy of our esteem. We see many persons who are able to act with vigor so long as they are sustained by popular opinion; but the moment this deserts them, they fall into utter imbecility, and the wonder is, how they ever have commanded the confidence and admiration of their fellows. But such are never heroes; they belong not

to the goodly fellowship of those who stoop their anointed heads as low as death, in defence of ennobling and saving truth. Christ, on the contrary, was the consummate model of the noblest cast of character; one "by its own weight made steadfast and immovable." Suffering emancipated, instructed, and consolidated his mind, as it does in every hero truly great. The burdens which Isaiah, Stephen, Paul, and Luther bore, gave steadiness to their movements and energy to their limbs.

"Thus doth strength  
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
Minister like a slave."

Schiller, full of that self-relying individuality which afterwards made him a master in his sphere, when encompassed with the gloomy auspices of his early manhood, exclaimed bravely to his friend, "O Karl, so long as my spirit can raise itself to be free, it shall bow to no yoke!" Christ acted on this principle, above and beyond all human beings. Difficulty was the element in which he wrought out his mental greatness in the presence of man, as if on purpose to teach him to resist resistance, and in the fierceness of holy endeavor to grow strong. The opposition of men, and the buffetings of elemental storms, the sudden vicissitudes of time, and the adversities of adverse fate, are all designed to drive man from the vassalage of grovelling conventionalities, and lift him to the exalted regions of pure action and free thought. To the true champion, susceptible of great improvement and beneficent deeds, "if misfortune comes, she brings along the bravest virtues." The path to perfection is always difficult; but the trials which the aspirant meets are designed to rouse, and not to discourage, him. He must win strength and speed, as grow the eagle's wings and the giant's arms; he must tunnel the mountains in his way, or soar above them.

Doubtless the difficulties of our state are among its best blessings. "The distance at which good objects are placed, and the obstacles which intervene, are the means by which

Providence rouses, quickens, invigorates, expands, all our powers. These form the school in which our minds and hearts are trained. Difficulty and hardship bind us more closely to objects. We love more ardently what we have suffered to attain, and enjoy nothing so exquisitely as what we have pursued through calamity and danger. It is in such pursuits, when we endure and labor for ends which conscience and religion enjoin, that our whole nature is called forth and perfected. The heart gains new ardor, the understanding new clearness and vigor. A delightful consciousness of rectitude sustains us, even if we fail, and gives a rapture to success." Christ came to teach us that all wisdom is bought with labor and pain, and that we arrive at holy truth and the highest bliss only through great tribulation. True, we are on a field of battle, and imminent are the perils which menace us on every side; but the vestiges of a celestial Leader are palpable all around, telling both where and how he fought and conquered, winning from this tear-wet and sanguinary ground crowns of righteousness and victory for every brave comrade in the war. This independent self-reliance of the great Captain of our salvation is happily adapted to soothe and encourage every manly follower, and in the hours of exhaustion and doubt to rouse in him invincible faculties kindred to the perfect model he emulates. Like him, he will struggle most for elevation of soul, and press perpetually towards a throne on high, not advancing like an earth-fowl blown upward by the chance direction of impetuous gusts, but soaring through a purer and calmer medium to genial skies, upborne by wings full of living and growing power.

In contemplating the discipline of Christ preparatory to his public career, one cannot but be struck with the fitness he attained through the practice of perpetual industry and fearless thought. He never required others to earn his bread or do his thinking. He endured patiently many personal wrongs, and much social oppression; but he never permitted tyrants of any degree to dictate to him what to believe. He would



suffer no spiritual intolerance, and he practised none. He pitied the ignorance and bigotry of mankind, and devoted his entire life to the work of teaching them; but he never coerced an individual to a particular belief. He poured forth heart emotions and rational motives enough to subdue and lead captive all; but he left his disciples, like himself, free in every decision and act. He wished to see none involved in meshes, or incarcerated in gloom, which suffocated every exhilarating breath, and crippled all vigorous growth. Every act he performed, every precept he inculcated, every prayer he offered, was designed to open a free and fascinating communication between himself and every other soul, that all might stand enthralled by affection and rapturous thought in his presence, but no one palsied by ignorance or chilled by fear. He came to earth, burdened with immortal verities which he panted to distribute through every avenue of the general heart; he was accustomed to "breathe in worlds to which the heaven of heavens is but a veil," and his only desire was to elevate the degraded of every class to an unbounded participation of a mental life and moral grandeur as unshackled and glorious as his own. If we would be like him, we must not fail to imitate this divine trait in his character and life. We must rise above contracted dogmas, disregard ephemeral dignities, inhale the sublime majesty of Jesus, and, like him, be at once the servant and victor of the world. In the language of another, we may exclaim,—

"What faculties slumber within, weighed down, by the chains of custom! The want of courage to carry out great principles, and to act on them at all risks, is fatal to originality and freshness. Conformity benumbs and cramps genius and creative power. We must commit ourselves fully to a principle of truth and right; we must dare to follow it to the end. Moral independence is the essential condition of loving warmly, thinking deeply, acting efficiently, of having the soul awake, of true life. This habit of reliance on principle should give us a buoyant consciousness of superiority to every

outward influence. A far-sighted anticipation of great results from worthy deeds should make us strenuous in action, and fill us with a cheerful trust. No particular interests should absorb our sympathies; but our hearts should flow out in sensibility to every thing which concerns humanity, so that the pursuit of particular objects may expand and exalt our whole power of good, and free us from all narrowness of spirit or fanaticism. A minister should be possessed with the consciousness of a higher law than public opinion, traditionary usage, prevalent fashion. Strictness, sternness, may often be demanded of him to whom conscience is the supreme law; and power and majesty belong to him who yields himself up in willing obedience to the absolute rectitude of God.

“A bold, free tone in conversation, the decided expression of pure and lofty sentiment, may be influential to change the whole temper and cast of thinking of society around us. Are we not traitors to great truths when we suppress the utterance of them, and let the opposite errors pass unrebuked? Ought not the spirit of the world to be continually met with mildness, yet unflinching firmness? It cannot be opposed too steadily and uncompromisingly. To bring out a noble spirit into daily intercourse, is a more precious offering to truth than retired speculation and writing. He who leaves a holy life behind him, to bless and guide his fellows, bequeaths to the world a richer legacy than any book. The true, simple view of right should be presented without disguise. High principles are to be advanced as *real* laws; the vague uncertainty wrapped round them by unmeaning professions and practical renunciation is to be stripped away, and they are to be firmly set up as standards for the judgment of all men, public and private. No air of superiority, contempt, anger, no fault-finding cynicism, no thought of self, should mingle with this testimony to right; but a true love of mankind, a reverence of virtue, a desire to elevate all men to the nobleness for which they are destined, should manifest the depth and purity of our moral convictions.”

Our greatest anguish is internal, connected with those efforts which transpire in every thinking soul, as it gropes in that partial night wherein Providence has thought best to leave the reason of man, with respect to his origin, his nature, and his destiny. In relation to the most important matters, we acutely and constantly feel the need of a guide, one who can arrest us from the labyrinths of doubt, and transport us to the regions of light and security. Christ is that blessed guide, who, by his own severe experience in our flesh and among our toils, escaped from the cold and gloomy abstractions of heathen philosophy, rose above the confused jargon of the schools, resolved the problem of human destiny, and unveiled life and immortality to the feeblest vision and the dullest heart. He demonstrated that for the simplest and rudest mind to embrace true religion, it had but to seize on a few salient and saving truths. It had not to entangle and confound itself amid a maze of manifold claims, conflicting authorities, and impossible persons. Supreme love to God, obedience to the Great Teacher sent, and devotion to the welfare of our brother man,—these constituted the one great doctrine which gleamed in all his discourse, and was exemplified in all his career. With Christ, religion was not a mere theory, but a holy and radiant fact, a prolific and powerful life, adapted, through its urgency and agency, example and appeal, to qualify its subjects, struggling to vanquish oppression without and within, to rise above feverish excitement and fainting flesh, to serene heights in the skies, where Jehovah welcomes the champions from earth, and crowns them with joy forevermore.

In his own person, Christ naturalized human affection and intellect, as well as set it free. At the time of his advent, the earth groaned, being burdened, as at the present day, with a surplusage of mechanical contrivances, to force arbitrary principles upon man, crushing his unfolding faculties, instead of promoting their natural evolution, the growth of the mind itself. Spiritual faculties, susceptibilities, and tastes, of the

highest power and progressiveness, lie wrapped in that germ of vital intelligence which has been planted in every human being; and it is the budding forth, the legitimate unfolding and expansion, of this manifold embryo, which demands our chief care. All the kingdoms of knowledge on earth, and all the appliances which can by any means be produced, only form the compost out of which the living germ grows, extracts aliment, and assimilates all strength and fruitfulness to itself. It is just so far useful, and no farther, as it contributes to develop and fortify the faculties around which it is accumulated and applied. The growth of the inner and essential man is all that is needed, and this only is valuable. The mind of man is not a soil, and its varied information the diversified flowers and harvests that root themselves therein. On the contrary, mind itself is the plant of immortal worth, and knowledge the soil to be drawn around, not to overwhelm it, but to promote the growth of its roots and to ripen its fruits. Christ came "to plant the tree of life, to plant fair freedom's tree," simultaneous with the growth of which, every soul should expand its roots and stretch its boughs, imbibing vigor from all healthful elements, and producing fruit in every land. He would not have the plant of righteousness cooped in the effeminate air of Pharisaic conservatories, nor boxed within the contracted dimensions of Sadducean creeds, but rooted and grounded in the firm soil and granite of world-wide truth, where the free mountain winds of Heaven's own divinity might have leave to blow against it.

Christianity is as flexible in its adaptation as it is potent in its efficiency. It is a power which can cope with the grossest systems of idolatry, or eradicate the last stain from a saint; kindle in an infant the first gleam of devotion, and thrill the highest angel forever with aspiring thought. What the world most needs is, to be brought under the influence of a religion so happily adapted to its constitution and wants.

"An amusing story is to be found in the *Spectator* of a man in the pursuit of health by rule. He was possessed of a strange

notion that his constitutional soundness might invariably be tested by the weight of the body. He furnished himself, therefore, with a weighing-chair, and regulated his food, exercise, sleep, and all other movements, by a perpetual reference to the index of his machine. This is a fair type of the mechanical regularity within the range of human contrivance. How different is that of nature! There, too, we have laws, constant as the daily course of the sun in the heavens; but laws, the special and external modifications of which adjust themselves with the nicest accuracy to the multiform conditions under which they develop themselves. The vital energy which moulds the oak or the elm, will unerringly put itself forth according to certain definite structural rules; and the result will be that, in the form and color of the leaf, the general grouping of the twigs, the direction of the branches, and the contour of the whole tree, the one may be readily distinguished from the other. But with this wonderful regularity there is combined a variety yet more wonderful. No two trees of the same species are identically alike. The inward law, which secures a structural sameness, leaves its work to be modified by the innumerable external circumstances in the presence of which it exerts itself; and accordingly, instead of having a dull monotony, wearisome to the eye and oppressive to the spirits, we have an infinite variety adapted to give play, by turns, to all our pleasurable emotions.

“Christianity in the heart of man, say, rather, in the bosom of society, is a vital energy, working by rule, clothing itself in certain well-defined and identical forms, fashioning out of human powers and passions certain structural results, weaving into a tissue of the same general character and fabric all the moral elements which constitute the material of its designs, and thus securing an external regularity and order. But the laws by which it works out these results are, to a certain extent, capable of modification by every variety of surrounding influences. The unchangeable tendencies of the vital, motive principle, which, like leaven, is to leaven the whole mass of

humanity, are found, nevertheless, to harmonize with an extremely flexible and self-adjusting system of instrumentality; a system which, retaining under all circumstances certain leading and cognizable forms, may yet adapt itself to the special peculiarities of time, place, custom, habit, and political constitution, and may take an outward modification of form — here, for instance, by a healthy excitement, stimulating an active zeal; there, by enlightened instruction, regulating fervor in danger of running into fanaticism — from the peculiar moral atmosphere, the combination of outward influences, in the midst of which it grows.”

The most conclusive proof of the supernatural origin of our religion is found in its naturalness, in its adaptation to our highest wants and noblest growth. It imparts to its possessor “that inner eye which is the bliss of solitude,” and causes him to “hear the veiled gods walk at night through the hushed chambers of his listening soul.” Intellect reigns supreme, associated with invincible faith, its living soul and quickening spirit. Throned in the august temple of universal truth, the votary yields to no error, and sinks before no obstacle; fortified as he is by God on high and his own true purpose, he is destined to conquer all enemies, and work out a resistless life through self-reliance and heavenly aid. He makes his body and all its senses subservient to the higher interests of the soul, and walks abroad under the everlasting firmament, rejoicing in the light which radiates every where in the placid regions of his choice, and becomes worthy, because willing, to commune with Jehovah, face to face. The mind thus emancipated from earth-born conventionalities, and made one with great nature, has its movements measured by the movements of the universe. Stationed on the Alps of divinest knowledge and holiest delight, the devout servant of God and man, watchful and free, beholds the effulgence of a brighter morn bursting on a world too long obscured by superstitious fear, and rejoices at the sight as an exiled angel would rejoice before the unfolding gates of heaven. These are the true disciples of Him who appeared on earth to

give liberty and naturalness to the human mind. They are beacon-lights, kindled to cheer and guide the benighted race. They resemble the mountains which the pure and tranquil dawn smiles on long before the rising of common day, and which, as they were the first to hail the rising sun, so, struggling against darkness early and late, they preserve far into night the lingering beams of his glory.

By emancipating the affections and intellect of man in his own person, and by providing for their natural growth, Jesus Christ rendered these attributes more intense and palpable to every human being. It is hard for man to become the absolute slave of custom, to efface completely from his brow the mark of his divine origin, and crush fully from his heart the dream and the daring of his immortal destiny. Yet is he often so abjectly subservient to the powers of darkness, that he needs some one who has partaken of his sorrows, but not of his guilt, to stand up with divine earnestness, and tell him how much he has deflected from virtue's path, and how much energy, as well as happiness, by this rebellion he has lost. This was the mission of humanity's great model and sufferer, the immortal Nazarene. His infant slumbers, his juvenile toils, his manly experience, his public ministry, his conquest over hell and triumphant ascent to heaven, had a much more intimate connection with human history than theologians are wont to recognize. If we would follow in his footsteps, we must develop the entireness of our energies, as he did his, loving as well as learning, doing as well as believing, since knowledge and faith are valuable only so far as they conduce to vigorous thinking and beneficent deeds. When Jesus appeared, he found power and craft leagued together, and every where employed in grinding man in the dust. Priests claimed the privilege of exercising the twofold function of teacher and tyrant; and it was against fragmentizing the human soul that he was prepared to protest with the whole force of his life and all the eloquence of his warmest blood. It was this tenderness of Christ that touched all hearts, and drew the multitudes close around him, and made

his frank and courageous example, as well as his benignant words, an irresistible sermon which will speak to the remotest generations of mankind. All ingenuous spirits will see the adaptation, and verify in themselves the infinite worth, of that religion which unfolds the harmony of our physical nature as it ascends to the intellectual; the harmony of the intellectual as it ascends to the moral; the harmony of the moral as it ascends to the religious; and when it has unfolded all the harmony of the religious, causes its subject, by a spontaneous and glorious transition, to ascend to heaven as a son of God. While preparing for his public toils, our Lord moved about gently among the race he came to redeem, like "stillest streams watering fairest meadows;" but he every where made hearts feel his presence, and from first to last ruled only by the power of his love.

We have considered the experience which in his early manhood Christ had of social oppression, and the trials he endured of personal self-reliance. Let us now glance at the discipline he was made to feel under the seductions of power. From the account which the evangelists give of the fast, and the scene at the pinnacle of the temple, it is clear that the Savior did not wish to free himself from the sense of human weakness and dependence; that he would work no miracle for that purpose. Speaking of the still more remarkable temptation of universal dominion, Neander remarks, —

"We do not take the third temptation as implying literally that Satan proposed to Christ to fall down and do him homage, as the price of a transfer of dominion over all the kingdoms of the world: no extraordinary degree of piety would have been necessary to rebuke such a proposal as this. We consider it as involving the two following points, which must be taken together, viz., 1. The establishment of Messiah's dominion as an outward kingdom, with wordly splendors; and, 2. The worship of Satan in connection with it, which, though not fully expressed, is implied in the act which he demands, and which Christ treats as equivalent to worshipping him. Herein was the temptation,



that the Messiah should not develop his kingdom gradually, and in its pure spirituality from within, but should establish it at once, as an outward dominion; and that although this could not be accomplished without the use of an evil agency, the end would sanctify the means.

“ We find here the principle, that to try to establish Messiah’s kingdom as an outward, worldly dominion, is to wish to turn the kingdom of God into the kingdom of the devil; and to employ that fallen intelligence which pervades all human sovereignties, only in a different form, to found the reign of Christ. And in rejecting the temptation, Christ condemned every mode of secularizing his kingdom, as well as all the devil-worship which must result from attempting that kingdom in a worldly form. We here find the principle, that God’s work is to be accomplished purely as his work and by his power, without foreign aid; so that it shall all be only a share of the worship rendered to him alone.

“ We find, then, in the facts of the temptation the expression of that period that intervened between Christ’s private life and his public ministry. These inward spiritual exercises bring out the self-determination which stamps itself upon all his subsequent outward actions. Yet we dare not suppose in him a choice, which, presupposing within him a point of tangency for evil, would involve the necessity of his comparing the evil with the good, and deciding between them. In the steadfast tendency of his inner life, rooted in submission to God, lay a decision which admitted of no such struggle. He had, in common with humanity, that natural weakness which may exist without selfishness, and the created will, mutable in its own nature; and only on this side was the struggle possible — such a struggle as man may have been liable to, before he gave *seduction* the power of *temptation* by its own actual sin. In all other respects, the outward seductions remained outward; they found no selfishness in him, as in other men, on which to seize, and thus become internal temptations, but, on the con-

trary, only aided in revealing the complete unity of the divine and human, which formed the essence of his inner life.

“Nor is it possible for us to imagine these temptations originated *within*; to imagine that Christ, in contemplating the course of his future ministry, had an internal struggle to decide whether he should act according to his own will, or in self-denial and submission to the will of God. We have seen, from the third temptation, that, from the very beginning, he regarded the establishment of a worldly kingdom as inseparable from the worship of the devil; he could, therefore, have had no struggle to choose between such a kingdom, outward and worldly, and the true Messiah-kingdom, spiritual, and developed from within.

“Even the purest man, who has a great work to do for any age, must be affected more or less by the prevailing ideas and tendencies of that age. Unless he struggle against it, the spirit of the age will penetrate his own; his spiritual life and its products will be corrupted by the base admixture. Now, the whole spirit of the age of Christ held that Messiah’s kingdom was to be *of this world*, and even John Baptist could not free himself from this conception. There was nothing *within* Christ on which the sinful spirit of the age could seize; the divine life within him had brought every thing temporal into harmony with itself; and, therefore, this tendency of the times to secularize the theocratic idea could take no hold of him. But it was to press upon him from *without*: from the beginning, this tendency threatened to corrupt the idea and the development of the kingdom of God, and Christ’s work had to be kept free from it; moreover, the nature of his own Messianic ministry could only be fully illustrated by contrast with this possible objective mode of action; to which, foreign as it was to his own spiritual tendencies, he was so frequently to be urged afterward by the prevailing spirit of the times.”

From an early period in his sublunary course, our Redeemer “suffered, being tempted;” but with strong hope and patient endurance, he resisted the most crafty onsets of the foe.

The divinity of his nature was firm as the eternal throne, while the sensibilities he bore, swayed by all the innocent infirmities of humanity, were as lovely and flexible as a rose-bough waving in the breeze. It was only so far as he was intrinsically divine that he was competent to redeem; it was by resisting in his own person the evils we incur that he could best open a way of deliverance and teach us how to overcome. He thus "fought to protect, and conquered but to bless;" each battle being directed against our common adversary, whose temptations, under the guise of wealth and dominion, are hardest to resist. Thankful, indeed, should we be that we have a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet sinless. It is from his own experience that Christ speaks, when he directs us to resist the devil and he will flee from us. Every hero, destined to struggle against the powers of darkness with energy and success, will first be most sorely tried in view of emoluments and power, proffered by the great enemy of good. The church too much neglects its most gifted sons. But when human friendship is dumb, and earthly resources are all sealed, how sweet, in the sadness of young hopes oppressed, to hear Jesus whisper, "Be of good cheer; I have conquered the world!"

How did Christ resist the temptations of power? He made himself his own fountain of honor, and guarded that fountain with strength derived from on high. He was the root of Jesse, the offspring of mightiest kings, the herald and pledge of the greatest renown; but so far from boasting of royalty, he ever scorned to assume the airs of superiority. It seemed to be his purpose to demonstrate before all the world that it is only in personal merit that genuine distinction lies,—that one can no more invest himself with ancestral fame, than he can clothe himself in the beams of yesterday's sun, which departed with the sun itself. "He who works God-like, works for his brethren and his age; purifies his own blood beyond all the factitious quackery of heralds, and the lies of fashion; he makes it a

foundation of honor to himself and his children, if they follow in his steps;—of shame to them, if they depart from them. He, and he alone, is the noble. He alone carries God's patent in his hand, the star of unflecked honor in his heart; and all besides, though they number ancestors by thousands, are but wretched impostors, and presumers on a lie.

"That old boast  
Of blood is but opinion's idle brag,  
And nature knows no 'scutcheons."

Jesus Christ, in the discipline of his early manhood, the type of all redemption, from the most sombre depths of obscurity rose before men and angels, developing the attractiveness of infinite worth, nurtured amid trials of every sort, like a sea-flower, whose roots interlace and penetrate the profoundest caverns, but whose stem mounts through unfathomed billows to the surface, and unfolds its petals to wanderers in storm and calm. His royalty began in the nakedness and gloom of the manger, was educated through a career of incessant toil, fatigues, and watchings, in which the rising Champion gathered a few palms and acclamations from the masses, between whom and himself there was cordial love, until bigoted power interposed. But these were soon followed by the maledictions which kingcraft and priestcraft had inspired, the anguish of the garden and the tortures of the pretorium. Finally, bowed beneath the cross he bore, his brow being wreathed with a diadem of thorns, and his lips redolent of blessings on his murderers, he goes forth to expire on the mount which overlooked Tophet, that type of hell, whose powers he came to conquer and destroy.

In the above description, we have limited our views mainly to the discipline which our Lord experienced anterior to his public life, in which, we think, his most manly energies were educated, and a divine example of consecrated genius was displayed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRIST AS A PREACHER.

IN HIS PUBLIC LIFE, THE BENEFICENT CHAMPION OF UNIVERSAL RIGHTS.

IN his advent, Christ identified himself with the lowly condition in which the masses of mankind are born. In his youth, he was occupied in toil such as the great majority of men pursue. In his maturity, he was trained by sufferings such as mankind in general are doomed to endure. These are points elsewhere discussed. It is our present purpose to consider the character of our Lord as a preacher.

Having passed through the preparatory discipline requisite to the Messianic office, and having spoken to his disciples in private, he enters upon his public career. Popular attention is excited; persons of every age, sex, and condition are addressed; and this extraordinary Teacher draws around him crowds of men who never leaned on the bosom of a loving master, were never instructed in the language of sympathy and friendship, but who, despite the power of depraved passion and prejudice, now listen with attention the most profound, and with delight openly declared. The most significant and valuable encomium on record, respecting preaching, is the testimony of Mark, that the common people, the miscellaneous multitudes, heard Jesus gladly. We interpret this fact by supposing that he addressed a common nature, aroused common emotions, and imparted common blessings. Christ addressed a common nature, since he shared our human condition in all its wants, and respected it; he aroused common emotions, because his own sympathies were excited, and his esteem for our ruined race was legitimately exemplified; and he imparted common blessings through labors for the redemption of the

common people which were most intense, and by the exercise of love towards them in every respect the most impartial. Let us examine these points consecutively.

Our primary remark is, that the multitudes who attended the ministry of Christ heard him with delight because he addressed a nature common to them all. He was qualified to do this effectively for two especial reasons.

First, he shared our human condition in all its wants. We believe that the true humanity of the Son of God is as fundamental an article of Christian doctrine and consolation as his true divinity. To say that Christ was not real man, we regard as heterodox as that he was not real God. Scripture describes him as being at one time "in the *form of God*," and at another as "being in the form of man." The expression is exactly the same when applied to the preëxistent state of our Lord, and when describing his incarnate condition. The propriety of this is seen in the necessity of the case. He is a mediator between God and man; and "a mediator is not a mediator of one," but must partake of the nature of both. The most comforting and upholding truth in the Bible, consists in the fact that the Redeemer is, in the strictest and most endearing sense, our kinsman. We may often have occasion to resist erroneous doctrines touching the humanity of Christ, but we should neither underrate, nor overlook, this grand truth of salvation — that the Son of God became as truly, and as literally, human, as the beings he came to redeem are human. We cannot, and we need not, allow that there was in him that fountain of evil which there is in ourselves. "We contend that the absence of the fountain, and not the mere prevention of the outbreak of its waters, is indispensable to the constitution of such purity as belonged to the holy child Jesus. But that he was like myself in all points, my sinfulness only excepted; that his flesh, like mine, could be lacerated by stripes, wasted by hunger, and torn by nails; that his soul, like mine, could be assaulted by temptation, harassed by Satan, and disquieted under the hidings of the countenance of the Father;

that he could suffer every thing which I can suffer, except the remorse of a guilty conscience ; that he could weep every tear which I can weep, except the tear of repentance ; that he could fear with every fear, hope with every hope, and joy with every joy, which I may entertain as a man, and not be ashamed of as a Christian ; — there is our creed on the humanity of the Mediator. If you could once prove that Christ is not perfect man, — bearing always in mind that sinfulness is not essential to this perfectness, — there would be nothing worth battling for in the truth that Christ was perfect God ; the only Redeemer who can redeem, like the Goel under the law, my lost heritage, being necessarily my kinsman ; and none being my kinsman who is not of the same nature, born of a woman, of the substance of that woman, my brother in all but rebellion, myself in all but unholiness.”

Various reasons have been suggested why Christ styled himself the “Son of man :” probably the best was his conscious relation to the human race — a relation which stirred the very depths of his heart. He called himself the “Son of man” because he had appeared as a man ; because he belonged to mankind ; because he had done such great things even for *human* nature, (Matt. ix. 8 ;) because he was to glorify that nature ; because he was himself the realized ideal of humanity.

Says Schleiermacher of the title “Son of man,” “Christ would not have adopted it had he not been conscious of a complete participation in human nature. Its application would have been pointless, however, had he not used it in a sense inapplicable to other men ; and it was pregnant with reference to the distinctive differences between him and them.” As has been suggested, the fundamental idea of the title is, perhaps, allied to that involved in the Jewish designation of Messiah as the “second Adam ;” but it is clear that Christ was not led by this fact alone to adopt it. “Much rather do we suppose that the name, although used by the prophets, received its loftier and more profound signification from Christ’s own

divine and human consciousness, independent of all other sources. It would have been the height of arrogance in any man to assume such a relation to humanity, to style himself absolutely MAN. But He, to whom it was natural thus to style himself, indicated thereby his elevation above all other sons of men — the Son of God in the Son of Man.”

The time arrives when the Redeemer should manifest himself more openly to the world: he emerges from the artisan's shop, through a long and varied course of experience, rises naturally into the sphere of beneficent action, and his public life has commenced. He instructs, reprovcs, commands, and exercises all the functions connected with our social condition. The cares of authority, the fatigues of power, and all the yearnings of charity divine, were exemplified in him. In solitude he has garnered every sentiment that is pure, and in practical efforts to do good he has rendered himself skilful in the use of all the means adapted powerfully to move mankind. Filial love dwells in his bosom, intimately blended with chaste friendship and generous compassion. He shares in the joys and griefs of all around him; mingles in the festivity at Cana, and anon passes forty days in the desert without either companion or food. Vicissitudes of joy and grief, complacency and indignation, sweep over him as over other men. Calumny, treason, and dark ingratitude pursue him at one moment, and boisterous applause hails him the next. Envious priests spread vengeful nets in his private paths, and state tyrants plot more publicly to destroy his life. He experienced every form of favor and hate, serene confidences as well as sombre despair, and in his own destiny wrought out the destinies of all our race. Truly did he carry our sorrows and experience our griefs; and it was this practical knowledge that gave him unlimited popular power. He addressed no peculiar or limited order of feelings, but united in his discourse all the qualities and emotions which are spontaneous in every order and condition of mankind. His audience was coëxtensive with humanity itself, because his experience included the



experiences of all, and as his heart thrilled and responded to their own, he verified in the highest sense the saying that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Hence the mercifulness and wisdom of Christ's incarnation; he must assume the form, and experience the condition, of a servant, that he might bind our hearts to eternal life with the trembling fibres of his own. Even for those fledged souls who desire to soar upon the wings of devout meditation, it is well, from time to time, Antæus like, to rest upon this grosser sphere; it was infinitely more necessary that he who came to elevate us from earth to heaven should absorb into his own person, and destroy the oppressions of our present state, that we might have both space and power to rise. This he did. He became the son and companion of the common people; was born in a town proverbially depraved; of a nation preëminently distinguished for superstition, national pride, bigoted self-esteem, and contempt towards all other men. He chose to arise "in an age of singular corruption, when the substance of religion had faded out from the mind of its anointed ministers, and sin had spread wide among a people turbulent, oppressed, and down-trodden; a man ridiculed for his lack of knowledge, in this nation of forms, of hypocritical priests and corrupt people, falls back on simple morality, simple religion, unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices; thus more than realizing the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudice of his age, nation, or sect; gives free range to the spirit of God in his breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honored as it was — its forms, its sacrifice, its temple, and its priests; puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, learned, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as Heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the prophets, the Rabbis — he rises above them all.

Christ was greater, more popular as a teacher, than those who preceded him, because he was more manly, imbued with more natural dignity and grace. He habitually spoke as a being related to all whom he addressed. He never arrogated

to himself superiority over the humblest, and a narrower sphere than the whole world for the exercise of his benevolent regards seems never to have entered his thoughts. This native tone of grandeur and love which pervaded his teaching was duly impressed on his hearers. He breathed more energy into them than did common teachers, because he had more to breathe; and they in turn were inclined to manifest esteem for him proportioned to the natural enthusiasm he kindled in their souls. The multitudes pressed upon his steps, published his glory, and diffused his fame all around. Until corrupted by priestcraft, and suborned by aristocratic power, the common people spread their garments, and cast palm branches in the triumphal way of the great Teacher whom they adored.

Secondly, Christ not only shared our human condition in all its wants, but he profoundly respected it; and this was another secret of his great popular power. He recognized the fact that, whatever may be the feebleness of man and his degree of corruption, the immortal principle within, which reminds him of his origin and destiny, never loses its empire upon the soul; a deathless fibre forever remains in the heart to vibrate to the influence of true religion. Connected with this is another fact of great importance: it is, that the common people are competent to appreciate the profoundest truths that any teacher can distinctly state. Not many mighty, not many noble, in this world's estimation, become the disciples of Christ, because they rely more on mind, the faculty of pride, than on love, the faculty of devotion. In the day of judgment, many a peasant will appear more imbued with faith and light than the doctors of the law, because affection sees farther than intellect; and when the soul yields to her mild but potent influence, truth accompanies her flight, as an eagle seizes her little ones upon her back and bears them to the sun.

It is the plain, practical, and yet profound common sense of the masses, that saves the world when statesmen and men of genius fail in their mission, and betray, with the cause of God, the cause of humanity. It is reason in the toil-worn and

suffering which counteracts ambitious diplomacy and the vagaries of inexperienced abstractionists. It is the people, the great masses, between whom and Jesus were such mutual sentiments of esteem, who in every age receive from God the instinctive wisdom necessary to resist the treason against popular rights which the masters of the world employ all their resources to execute. This, the heroical aspect of human nature, Christ respected, as he did every thing interesting and great in man. Those profound aspirations, latent in every mind, and which the thoughtful keenly feel compelling them to live in the past as well as the future, Christ did not despise; on the contrary, he incurred the deepest opprobrium, and suffered the greatest sacrifice, that he might bestow on our race a religion adapted to educe all our faculties, and impart to them the divinest growth. He would deliver from all oppression, and conduct us out of the regions of contracted perception into the unbounded domains of enjoyment and thought. The soul pants for the unlimited and undying with a thirst which human objects cannot assuage. From the beginning, as Novalis remarks, "every science had its god, which was its end. Philosophers sought the unlimited, though they found only what is limited. They sought infinity, though they found only things." But Christ brought to earth the elements of a nobler science, free for all, and opened for every devotee instructions the most satisfying and sublime. They were in harmony with the deepest wants of the human heart and intellect; with the idea of perfection which slumbers there, and which, by his teachings, is awakened to reality and consciousness. Man every where requires not merely intellectual excitement and luxury, but an adoration, which humbles, sanctifies, and regenerates his higher powers: this was the prerogative of Him who is higher than all the sources of mere genius, and who came to the weary and heavy-laden people that they might freely drink of the waters of life. His words were spirit and vivifying power to the listening multitudes. He profoundly respected every vestige of God in man, feeling that the feeblest intellectual life, of which

obedience is the law, is but a participation of the supreme reason, a full consent to the testimony which Jehovah has himself rendered to his creature. All created intelligences are animated by rays of the eternal intelligence, that divine reason which communicates itself through the words of Christ, and is the cause of that divine life of which faith is the essential mode. The mortal combat of the flesh against the spirit goes ever on, and Christianity comes with its mighty energies to emancipate, enlighten, and transform the soul — a task effectually accomplished because the agency employed is but the assemblage and manifestation of all the truths useful to man.

They who do not profoundly respect the worth and capabilities of the common people, are always themselves unworthy of being confided in. The mind of the masses may often be quite uncultivated, but its instincts are always sure, and they never long adhere to leaders, or eulogize talents, which are not destined to enduring fame. The multitude, in its ignorance, is wiser than philosophers crippled and perverted by factitious learning, because it will not shut its eyes to that light, truly natural, which shines in the midst of the world, and enlightens all who are sincere. Who gave the signal of revolt against Jehovah, and provoked those calamities, the record of which is so frightful? Kings, and their courtiers, the leaders of schools, and the priests of a party. Such have ever been the instruments of supreme selfishness, and the chief destroyers of popular rights. They have always persecuted and oppressed humanity, as, under the false and lying protection of hypocritical sovereignty, they betrayed Christ to their pretorium, crowned him with a diadem of thorns, and, after having rendered his sacred head gory with their blows, knelt before him, exclaiming, *We salute thee, King of the Jews!*

On the contrary, who pressed around Christ, on the mountains, by the sea, and in desert places, to listen with profound respect to his instructions? The people. Who wished to choose him for ruler supreme, in the greatest transports of popular admiration crying, “Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in

the name of the Lord?" The people. Ay, who was it that professed to be scandalized because he healed the sick on Sabbath days, and thereupon interrogated him insidiously, that they might entrap him with their malice and destroy his life? Scribes and Pharisees, the tools of power and paragons of bigotry. Their astute and cunning hypocrisy deceived the people even, and in a moment of popular caprice impelled them to demand the death of Him who had nourished them in the desert with seven loaves, who gave health to their sick, sight to their blind, and life to their dead. But seeing how the heartless aristocracies of church and state had deceived the people, as the serpent deceived Eve, Jesus prayed his Father, saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Thus far we have considered how that Christ addressed our common nature, by personally sharing its wants and respecting its capacities. We proceed to remark, —

Secondly, Christ aroused common emotions, so that the multitudes heard him gladly. This result was produced from two causes: his own sympathies were excited, and his esteem for his hearers was legitimately exemplified.

In the first place, Christ aroused common emotions of interest and delight, because his own sympathies were excited in behalf of those who heard him. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor. He chose poverty, and laid aside all the outward appearances of high station and power, that he might come near to the multitudes and ingratiate their esteem. At the opening of his ministry, what a spirit of humanity did he breathe in the festive gathering at Cana of Galilee! But his chief sympathies are with the ignorant, the sinful, the oppressed, and those who mourn in solitude. He drew his confiding disciples and the common people into the most intimate relations with himself; journeyed with them on foot, communed with them as a loving equal, slept in their houses, sat at their tables, partook of their frugal fare, and poured upon their minds the highest truth in the simplest forms. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and his awakened

sympathies were the unerring guides which led him to the needy of every class. It was this combination of the spirit of humanity in its tenderest form, with native glories the most unrivalled and divine, that gave Christ such a hold on the masses of mankind. He was evidently anxious to see the cloud of ignorance and superstition, that darkens over our world, rent, and the full and sanctifying effulgence of truth flaming down into the chaos and torpidity of the people's being. As this was a true feeling on his part, it was promptly recognized and acknowledged on theirs. We cannot wonder at the solicitude which Christ felt, nor at the applause which his hearers bestowed. Ignorance wears a fearful aspect to one whose brain has been pierced by rays, however few and feeble, of a purer and more beautiful light than that of earth. To the Sun of Righteousness, then, how revolting, how overwhelmingly distressing, must be the sight of an ignorant, bigoted, depraved being! But such objects never repelled the active beneficence of his hands, nor chilled the ardor of his heart. However grim and incongruous might be such a spectacle of death in life, of life in death, Christ saw in it a human reality fitted to unseal all the fountains of his most weeping Godhead. He regards the victim of lust, and fully comprehends how depraved he is. The serene light of heaven has never visited his soul; but a lurid glare, engendered of the most loathsome corruptions, has flashed on his senses, and when he takes one step more desperate than the rest, it is only when that glare adds terror to his dismal path. Nature is fierce within him, and yet he is not natural; for though the companionship to which he seems doomed has gifted him with nothing else, it has taught him ingenuity in vices. But does Christ despise this brand almost consumed? No; to his eye the most deplorable aspect of the victim is, that the very faculties which prove and constitute his identity with the Omnipotent should be employed only as the instruments of sin, and that he should be able to sink so low in the abyss of iniquity, only by the aid of those energies which were generated in the bosom of God himself.

You may almost hear this humane Savior in every such case saying, Here is a brother, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, formed in the same exalted image as the best of his race, with the same mark of the divine upon his brow, with the same traces of celestial ancestry all through his soul ; yet he crawls on, unconscious of his divinity, in bestial degradation. And shall nothing be done to rescue him from the thrall of those appetites he unquestioning obeys ? nothing to arouse him from a slumber grosser and more gloomy than that of the brutes ? O, yes ; even in the most stupid and most depraved, the religious sentiment has an indestructible vitality ; and He whom humanity heard with delight will prove his claims on popular regard by breathing hallowed emotions into that wretched brother's heart. It was from condemnation, from sin and hell, that he came to save us ; and he delivers men from the worst practices and the most fearful doom, even though they have reached the lowest degree of corruption, and grovel at the very gates of the eternal pit.

Christ commanded the popular ear, because he sympathized with the popular heart, over which he poured his tears, and to redeem which he was ready to shed his blood. The eternal laws which slumber in the human breast he awoke into free action, and expressed with a clearness and power forever unsurpassed, developing, as he spoke, "energetic reason and a shaping mind." His own heart melted through all the tones and words he uttered ; and thus he engraved the noblest sentiments on the hearts of mankind with "such fiery characters as lightning on the rocks inscribeth." He impressed through his discourse the seal of life and action, energizing the "might that slumbers in a peasant's arm," every where making "the fresh air blow through the soul's shut-up mansion," that each bosom might swell as rapturously, and each mind soar as freely, as his own.

Jesus Christ fulfilled his ministry in the streets and highways. He did not seclude himself in some lonely sanctuary, but toiled and taught constantly among the masses, in the midst of the

world. He was compassionate toward all men, and was particularly attentive to the most destitute. When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with tender sympathy on their behalf, because they had neither instruction nor support. He wept for a fallen race, not with the tenderness of weakness, but of almighty strength; and it was the love of the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure, that touched the hearts of the populace and swayed them as the whirlwind sways summer foliage. His object was not to compel, but persuade; to gain consent where consent was wanting; to make willing what before was reluctant; to actuate the affections and woo their force; to make man say "yes," willingly and with joy, in a matter in which he was before inclined to say "no." The power he aimed at was the persuasion of creatures endowed with reason, capable of faith, and strongly affected by passion; accordingly the course he pursued was harmonious with the end he desired. The secret of his influence consisted in the nature of the religion he taught, in its depth of meaning and warmth of love, in its perfect simplicity and universal application. He expanded into innumerable forms, and diversified by infinite varieties of illustration, the great truths of human sinfulness and the infinite fulness of divine redemption. He humbled himself to the condition of the most humble, and poured out the greatest treasures at the feet of the most indigent, while in each act he was never formal, but fraternal, under the guise of a servant performing the functions of a God. He knew that a delicate and close net-work of sensibility is diffused over the entire body of society, rendering it susceptible of being acted upon at every point; and along this he poured a tide of his own sympathy, seeking the greatest good of the greatest number, until he had drawn all segments of the great circle of humanity to one central spot, the throbbing core of his own great and benevolent heart. It was this kind of address that aroused in the common people "all the mysterious world of eye and ear," making them to hang with delight upon the lips of the Son



of God, and to lean fondly towards his swelling breast. Each new principle he announced resounded in their intelligence like echoes from beyond the grave; and while they stood intralled by the splendor of a truth then first seen, they beheld in it a glass which showed them many more, — interminable vistas of glory, joys that should never end. It was Christ who first made the pulse of true religion beat in all the arteries of the common heart, and caused the people to feel that, invested with the serene and blessed atmosphere of his presence and instruction, they indeed stood in “the presence chamber of the King of kings.”

Let us remember that “there is in man an inward consciousness of worth, not individual, but generic, which, however it may be given to slumber, is almost invariably awakened by the show of sincere reverence. Pitiabie as may be his lot for the most part; cheerless and dark as may be the ignorance in which he lives; vitiated and vulgar as may be his appetites, worthless his ordinary pursuits, and perverse his will, — he yet possesses the elements of a noble nature. What susceptibilities lie buried in the bosom even of the most degraded! what high-wrought sympathies! what glorious powers! Woe be to them who can deliberately insult and despise *man*, clothed in any garb, or presenting himself to view under colors even the most repulsive. Ignorant as we may perchance find him, he is, nevertheless, a being capable of thought; malignant, as oftentimes he is, he was yet formed to love. There is nothing deep which we search into, nothing excellent which we feel, nothing heroic which we attempt, nothing great and praiseworthy which we do, which the poorest, meanest, most wretched outcast of us all, *might* not search into, feel, attempt, and effect. Lift him out of very abjectness of spirit; do homage, as becomes his fellow-mortal, to the imprint of divinity still visible upon his soul; remind him of his true dignity, by gently and reverentially appealing to the higher attributes of his nature; bow to him as a member, forgetful though he may have been of his relationship, of the

same family to which you yourself claim to belong,—and some ‘touches of kin’ will show themselves. A new life will quicken that man’s heart. The obeisance you have done to his nature, and to the image of God which you discerned there, if rightly, wisely, feelingly offered, will turn his attention, haply for the first time, to the rich worth of those elements of character, which, in self-ignorance, he has treated with cruel disrespect. By this means he is led to see himself—to feel his own powers—to learn the secret of his high birth. Other and nobler thoughts than those with which he has heretofore busied himself, will come crowding into his mind. The respect you have paid him will apply the match to a train of new aspirations. You will have aroused that consciousness within him, which alone can look round upon a home of darkness and disorder,—darkness in the understanding, and disorder in the passions,—and exclaim with surprise and shame, ‘What misery and pollution are here!’ True, that new-born consciousness may die again; but surely he does most for human nature, whose every aim is to keep it alive, and nourish and strengthen it, until it can bear no longer to dwell amid scenes so revolting.”

Christ best knew what was in man, and he was so bent on developing and ennobling his torpid powers, that gracious words and beneficent deeds were as common to him as vital air and daily bread. If he was the wisest teacher that ever descended from heaven, it was because he habitually acted on the principle that the religious sentiment in human beings is the mightiest agent on earth. To give this a proper training, and to preserve it from a perverted use, was his constant aim. To accomplish this the more benignly, and with the widest advantage, he did not conduct his hearers through the dubious region of conflicting theories, but brought them at once into the lucid medium of absolute truth; by word and action he reached their intentions through his own deepest and most tender consciousness, without permitting any intellectual refinements or fastidious niceties of the brain to check and chill

their outpouring. His ambition was to teach not so much the new as the true, and the true not as a logical formula or dogmatical proposition, but as a transparent and comprehensive religious sentiment, enlightening the conscience, spiritualizing the heart, elevating the soul, and regenerating the entire family of man, as it swept outward with infinite expansiveness to embrace the world. Hence, in the gospel, there is the calm of a mighty possession, the ravishing peace which follows the gratification of immense desires, the tranquil serenity of heaven even. He whom the earth waited for so long and anxiously has come. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." Under his auspices all assumes a new appearance; the time of symbols is passed; salvation is accomplished; and human nature, having won confidence in itself through the great Redeemer, experiences a calm and august repose, such as was never known before. The benighted has found light to guide, the feeble imbibes energy to sustain; and thus fortified with resources from on high, the confiding disciple is crowned with a divine sovereignty, "like Strength reposing on his own right arm." It is the prerogative and glory of Christianity to awaken in its subjects the free, earnest exertion of their powers; to kindle inward inspirations, and rouse the whole soul to a healthful activity and useful life. Therefore its nature is not arid and barren, revealing a precise and frigid doctrine which admits of no expansion, and feels no purifying and guiding fires in the heart and intellect. The religion which comes from the Creator of the human soul, which is adapted to its constitution, and which honors both the Maker and his work, tends perpetually to burst its limits and grow forever. Christ loved the people because they were common; because they were immortal creatures, men. He had faith in their improvement, and labored to promote within all "the fiery grandeur of a generous mind." He showed himself to be eminently the friend of the multitude; the defender of popu-

lar rights, as well as the foundation of eternal hopes; and by these demonstrations of practical goodness he took a powerful hold on their judgments and hearts. He made popular impressions through preaching and practice, that was replete with love, overflowing with mercy. He was not the impersonation of reason so much as affection; he dealt not so much with the moonbeams of cold dialectics, as with the brilliant sun-rays of fervid benevolence. He bent his ear to every sigh, put forth his hand to relieve every want of the distressed; and even when he had departed, it was natural that his sympathetic tones should come back upon the popular heart again, thrilling even to the eye's fountain. Christ addressed himself to the tendencies of our nature most easily awakened, whose education is the promptest, and whose results are the most enduring; to the powers of enjoyment, and he thereby won souls to happiness and peace; to the affections, and thus captivated them by love; to conscience, and caused it to respond to the instinctive voice of the moral sense; to the religious principle, and gave it the amplest means of redemption and eternal progress. In every miracle he performed on matter or on mind, it was our merciful Savior's purpose

"To raise the human to the holy,  
To wake the spirit from the clay."

We have said that Christ aroused common emotions, because his own sympathies were excited on behalf of the multitudes. We remark further, that his esteem for his hearers was legitimately exemplified, and for this reason especially he was heard with delight.

Consider the mode and the spirit of Christ's teaching. In the first place, the manner in which he addressed the people was calculated to fix their attention and conciliate their belief. In his teaching, says an American writer, "he was wont to employ a great variety of *illustrations*; sometimes by means of short and pointed similes; sometimes more expanded parables; and sometimes by incidental allusions to present objects and passing occurrences in the natural world. Scarcely ever does

he teach any important truth without making use of some well-chosen illustration, to render it more clear or more impressive. He knew the mental habits of the people to whom his preaching was addressed. He knew, that in general they were not a cultivated and an intellectual people. Their conceptions were gross, and they needed a species of instruction which should make much use of their senses in so setting truth before their minds as to do them good, and he adapted his instructions to them accordingly. When he would rebuke the pride of man, and inculcate on his disciples the need of cultivating a lowly and confiding temper of heart, he does not merely deliver to them the abstract and general, though all-important truth, that man must be converted and experience a radical transformation of character, in order to their being saved ; but, to impress this sentiment more strongly, he takes a little child and sets him in the midst of them, and then tells them how salvation is to be obtained : ‘ Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God. Whoso receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’ When he would teach men to confide in the all-governing providence of God, and not yield to impatience, or discouragement, or unbelieving fear, he summons to his aid the objects of Nature around him, and makes the dependence of all her tribes, animate and inanimate, subservient to his design. ‘ Consider the lilies of the field.’ ‘ Consider the ravens.’ Who nourishes them ? Who gives them their delicate clothing ? Who protects them in the storm ? Who preserves them through the changing seasons ? The field, untrodden by the foot of man, and uncultivated by human care, has flowers surpassing in glory the richest and wisest of earthly kings ; but ‘ they toil not, neither do they spin.’ Who rears and upholds these little and delicate structures ? ‘ If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not clothe you, O ye of little faith ?’ When our Savior would impress upon us the

duty of kindness to our poor neighbor, and tell us who is our neighbor, he relates the misfortune of a Jew, who 'went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves.' Waylaid and plundered by a band of robbers, he is left upon the highway, weltering in his blood, and half dead. A priest and a Levite pass by that way, but offer no aid to the sufferer. It is a Samaritan that, passing by, takes pity on him and saves his life. What a beautiful illustration is this, to show us who is our neighbor, and what is the proper conduct which is due from us one toward another in any circumstance of need! When he would make known to us the real feelings of our Creator, and of all holy beings, in view of the recovery of lost sinners, he gives us the story of the prodigal son; and thus refers us to the strongest sensibilities of nature within us, as an illustration of the paternal interest which God himself takes in beholding one of his lost creatures recovered to virtue and to happiness. This delightful interest, which the Creator himself feels in receiving back to his favor the lost sinner, is represented too as a diffusive common interest, felt throughout the heavenly world. What a vivid impression does this give us of the importance of a single conversion! In what other way could we have been made to feel this fact so strongly, or been prompted to use our powers so earnestly, in spreading abroad through the earth the means of salvation to our fellow-men! When he would teach us what it is to be finally lost from God's holy kingdom, or finally happy in his favor, what appalling and what delightful imagery does he employ! The poor, suffering Lazarus, coldly and disdainfully repelled from the sympathies of his fellow-men, and left to die of hunger at the gate of human affluence, because no man would give unto him, is carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. Despised on earth, he is admitted, beyond the grave, to the intimate fellowship of the 'father of the faithful.' Friendless on earth, when he dies, he is admitted to the bosom-confidence and communion of the 'friend of God.' Angels perform the office of conducting him to his blissful home. How exceedingly does

the imagery here employed heighten the impression of the simple truth thereby illustrated, that good men, however neglected and overlooked on earth, will be honored and happy in the world to come! So, too, on the other hand, what a fearful picture of wretchedness is that which is drawn by our Lord, in the same chapter, as descriptive of the state of a wicked man after death!"

It is to be observed that the miracles which Christ performed were designed to direct popular attention to his doctrines more than to his person. He knew that the fundamental principles of religion which he taught lay so near to the reason and conscience of mankind, that they needed only to have their attention directed towards them, in order to secure assent. For this reason, Jesus delivered his instructions with such a clearness and simplicity, such an energy and power, that they commended themselves immediately to every ingenuous heart. "His instructions exhibited none of those dialectical subtleties, deep speculations, and prolix demonstrations, which abounded in the systems of the old philosophers, and rendered them, how much soever good they might contain, totally unfit for the multitude at large. The most important truths, which, in the way of speculation, and by the greatest efforts of philosophizing reason, had either not been discovered at all, or but imperfectly, were represented by Jesus with such a lucid and touching simplicity, that they must be obvious to the most illiterate, and fill the most acute thinkers with admiration. At the same time, he delivered them as the instructions and expressions of God himself, and thereby clothed them with that authority, every where and to the highest degree valid, which is indispensable to the great mass of people, and, with them, holds the place of demonstration and the profoundest proofs, without prohibiting reason, however, from laboring further upon them, and endeavoring to deduce them from principles peculiar to itself alone."

One of the most important conditions fulfilled by the human life of our Redeemer was that of showing himself to be our brother. Under this character he always appeared, and never

more so than when employed in teaching. He realized, in the presence of the human race, an ideal of human perfection level to popular comprehension and within the reach of all. In his person, his demeanor, and his speech, the world saw the infinite brought down to our standard, so realized that we can easily understand it, and feel the majesty and beauty of that love to Christ which is nothing but the imitation of God brought near to the roused intellect and heart. We cannot wonder that the people were spell-bound in the presence of such a teacher. The pure and joyous effulgence of truth emanating from him must have captivated their vision, like the sun as he bathes with his beams fragrant vales and bleak mountain-tops. Christ was radiant with celestial benignity, which he transfused into the surrounding multitudes through the simplest expressions and most transparent life, fascinating the popular heart, and lifting it to a participation of immortal bliss.

But, turning from the form of his teaching, let us look more particularly to its spirit. The chief element of Christ's power lay in the fact that he thrilled the principle of perfectibility latent in every rational creature whom he addressed. By his own incarnation he glorified humanity, and came breathing into every recess of its bleeding and aspiring heart nothing but peace and love. He explained the possibility of our being one with God, and presented motives for our becoming grand as eternity. In this way he portrayed the soul as a treasure most precious, which the universal Father bends down with infinite solicitude to rescue, ennoble, and forever preserve. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said he; and his incessant effort was to elevate souls, by revealing to them the gospel plan of spiritual perfection. All his labors and lessons were designed to lift up the fallen race of Adam, to remove every obstruction in the way of moral improvement, and to show how man is to be loved as God's child, a creature of immortality, a temple built for the skies. Of all teachers Christ was the best, of all reformers the wisest and most beneficent; for his thoughts were the mightiest, and he strove with divinest zeal



to plant them in all the masses of mankind. He unfolded the reality of spiritual life, his example the best model, and his teaching the only sure guide.

The doctrines of Christ were at the same time the most practical and profound. His precepts were level to the capacities of a child, and yet they contained principles which the most matured and soaring intellect could never outrun. These were addressed to the wants, rather than to the worth, of their recipients. Their most distinguishing mark was a fulness of generosity; since the one avowed object of their Author was, "to do good and to communicate." Like a delicious air, laden with the most delicious odors, Christ every where made his presence manifest by the joys he awakened and the benefits he conferred. Sweet, gentle, conciliating, and yet most powerful, he approached human hearts to imbue them with something of his own divinity; and, by investing them with his own spiritualizing influences, not only to purify and gladden them, but to make them the almoners of like blessings to all other men. From first to last, there is all about the career of Christ the highest witchery of love. Unmasked and undesired, he sped his flight from celestial glory earthward in search of moral wretchedness, that he might relieve its woes. Then, with a bearing exquisitely harmonious with his mission, in unassuming gentleness, he knocked at the door of sick and sorrowing humanity; pityingly lifted the latch of our dilapidated nature; spoke in sympathizing, soothing accents; and, having beguiled the fainting and guilt-burdened spirit into peace and hope by a kiss of forgiveness, he smilingly displayed a store of inestimable blessings, and bade us welcome to the eternal feast. He knew that the soul can never be contented to be fed with trifles or amused with bawbles, and he therefore came not to work on the surface of human character, but to pervade it with himself, thus rendering it divine. He would breathe into the soul a heavenly energy, an indomitable force of will, teaching at once the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love. His spirit possessed a most purifying and expanding warmth, because "a

thousand hearts were great within him ;” and he was the glory of all spirits, since he was the pattern of the grandest ideas. Every speaker who would be influential must stir in the bosom of the people the noble sentiments of liberty, equality, and justice. Christ was the most efficient in this respect, because he invigorated every attribute he wrought upon, inspired infinite hopes, and clothed human nature with unfading righteousness and majesty. His own spirit was large as the suffering world he came to save ; and, in all his vicarious toils, he gathered bliss in seeing the needy blessed. The principles of Christianity are adapted to man’s nature, and are designed to make him a better citizen, kinder associate, truer friend, a nobler being every way. They excel all other influences, not in intensity only, but in extent ; they not only command, at one moment, the whole spiritual being, but retain their power through the whole course of existence, over every moment of an immortal life. They appeal to the thinking faculty of man, no less than to his heart and his conscience, making all our spiritual faculties to partake of the divine nature, to be filled with all the fulness of God.

Such were the mode and spirit of his teaching whom the common people gladly heard, and who aroused in them emotions common to all, because his own sympathies were excited, and his esteem for his hearers was legitimately exercised. Herein is a model for us not only to admire, but imitate ; for such must every disciple be who would honor God and benefit mankind.

“He lives and breathes  
For noble purposes of mind ; his heart  
Beats to heroic things of ancient days ;  
His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.”

We have considered two general points — that Christ addressed a common nature, and that he aroused common emotions in the masses among whom he moved. It remains, thirdly, to show that he imparted common blessings, and that he accomplished this through labors for the redemption of the

common people which were most intense, and by the exercise of love for them in every respect the most impartial.

In the first place, the labors of Christ for the redemption of the common people were most intense, and this caused them to receive him gladly. The world was divided into two classes, the rich and powerful on one hand, and on the other the poor and unfortunate. There was no middle space. The Messiah comes, and behold which side he takes! He confers his royalty and divinity mainly upon the destitute. "He is poor," exclaims the prophet Zechariah, as he beheld him from afar; and, declaring his own mission, "The Lord," said he, "has sent me to evangelize the poor." His precursor, John, sent disciples to question him, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or is it necessary to expect another?" And Christ responded, "Tell John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are purified, the deaf hear, the dead are raised." Is this all? No. Hear the crowning wonder! "The poor have the gospel preached to them." That is, science, light that is truthful, and dignity truly divine, are restored to that immense portion of humanity who had been cruelly deprived of these gifts designed for all. Jesus Christ never formed the slightest alliance with the oppressors of the masses; but, sweeping splendid tyranny from his path as often as he encountered it, he exclaimed, with ineffable tenderness, "I thank thee, O my Father, that thou hast concealed these things from the educated and sagacious, and that thou hast revealed them unto docile little ones." In a word, he established between himself and such, a bond of fellowship which will eternally protect the poor, and guaranty to them the respect of all coming time. "Whatever you shall do to the most dependent among these my brethren, it is even to me that you do it," were his gracious words.

Christ conquered the world by experiencing its deprivations, its oppressions, and all its woes. He started from the base of the pyramid of human society, and struggled up, by incessant toil, through all the superincumbent mass, before he entered

upon his public ministry; and then, from the highest point of earthly toil, he showed how we are to accompany him through much tribulation to the fairest heights of celestial glory. The Son of man was the manliest of men; the most humane, and, at the same time, the most brave; he taught as never man taught, because he sought usefulness rather than honors, and was ready to enter the lists against the most numerous and mighty foes, whenever the feeble were to be defended or the captive set free. It mattered not though crowned and mitred tyranny condemned his advocacy of mercy and truth. It was impossible for his righteous soul to be otherwise than "bold in the right, and too bold to do wrong." Christ was never afraid to speak out and tell men the truth. His denunciation of the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, those "whited sepulchres" of the nation in those last stages of degeneracy and moral putrescence which they had mainly produced, is in point to show that he was above the influence of fear or favor in his teaching, whatever might be the reputation of his hearers or the rank in which they moved. He never injured the wealthy and powerful by refraining from dealing out to them wholesome counsel; but his especial solicitude was for the welfare of the great multitudes who did not scorn his lowliness, but, on the contrary, in a measure, appreciated the constant labors he performed for their sakes, and gladly listened to his discourse. They recognized in him a sympathizing friend, an untiring brother, a champion divine.

"Patient of toil, serene amidst alarms,  
Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms."

Finally, the love of Christ for the common people was not only deep beyond all precedent, but it was also in every respect the most impartial; and, if any thing was wanting to secure their undivided regard, this would succeed beyond all other means.

Christianity was the first universal educator. Its spirit is the patron of all excellence, the enlightener of all mind, "the light

that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." When this Liberator of universal thought appeared, he signified the divine purpose of his mission in the well-known words, "The Lord has sent me to evangelize the poor." Why the poor? Doubtless because they formed the greatest number, and suffered the greatest wrongs; and, since all souls are of equal value before God, when he weighs them in the balance of eternal justice, the soul of the great masses should certainly preponderate. The common people recognized Christ, and adored him in the deepest obscurity, while, as he rose on the general view, men of station and power saw in him nothing to admire, but every thing to persecute. The people loved him, because they saw in him the transparent wisdom and impartial love they so much needed; and he in turn loved them the more, because, in their destitution and despair, they were willing to confide in him as the great Master who had come to teach every class of mankind without money and without price. This was instruction and love which met men's entire yearnings, aspirations, and powers, and was employed to raise human nature, by enlarging and cultivating its faculties, but not to fortify tottering thrones and exclusive sects. As Christ himself was conscious of a perfect union with God, he designed to produce, upon all who were susceptible of such a feeling, a corresponding impression of an existence pervaded with the fulness of the divine spirit and nature. Devout emotions, tender, fraternal bonds, and the sublimest aspirations, are inherent in the nature of the gospel, flowing spontaneously forth from the word, the spirit, and the life of Christ, and were most strongly confirmed by the perfect harmony between his manifestation in the flesh and that inward perception of the godlike, which, through it, was first awakened to full consciousness in the popular heart. Jesus was the Shekinah to the world; a palpable imbodiment of Jehovah to all men, in a far wider and higher sense than the Shekinah of old; for he was not merely a symbol of the divine perfections gleaming in the cloud, and circumscribed by a narrow sanctuary, but infinite wisdom and universal love *realized* distinctly

and rapturously to the common intellect and affection of mankind. The beloved Son was the bright image and representative of the great Father of us all, whose advent was designed to testify the worth of the soul in the sight of God, and to qualify it for the infinite functions for which it was framed.

In order best to accomplish the work which was given him to do, our Savior appeared in the greatest poverty, and lived upon the generosity of those who suffered with him the ills of life. With the noblest zeal he attacked the strongest party among his countrymen, and seemed purposely to excite the indignation of all who were tyrants and bigots at heart. To know who were the wretched creatures he most denounced, we have only to ascertain who had already inflicted the greatest wrongs on their race. The Pharisees had transformed morality into a subtle casuistry about ceremonials, and made it the patroness of most pernicious hypocrisy. The Sadducees had reduced it to a system of arbitrary maxims for the use of unprincipled sensualists; and the Essenes, to a gloomy asceticism, fit only for fanatical anchorites and morbid enthusiasts. They all agreed, however, to abandon the common people to uncultivated desires, and were satisfied themselves, selfishly, to conform to their own frivolous formulas, and treat the excluded multitudes with bitter contempt. To rescue morality from such degradation, and to open on earth the fountains of free salvation, instead of priestcraft so accursed, was the design of Christ and his glorious reward. He would convert men to himself by making them like himself, and thus bind them to each other with a love as comprehensive and magnanimous as his own. He would disabuse them of all prejudice, destroy from amongst them all hinderances to mutual improvement, and invest each devotee, at the shrine of impartial justice, with the nobility of heaven. He drew golden truth from its original sources, and scattered it as widely as possible among the miscellaneous crowds, not simply to meet their immediate wants, but to stimulate their appetite, and to remind them that the

inexhaustible mine was laid open to be explored by all. He sowed the field of the world with the seeds of most precious harvests thickly scattered, and invited every rank and condition to gather unlimited stores for themselves. He addressed the masses, and not private circles; went to the reading-desk of the synagogue, and not the secret alcoves of the temple; and made every spot where his feet stood and his voice resounded, a perpetual source of the widest, highest, freest, and most powerful instruction. It was his own declaration, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." That is, all men are made susceptible of emotion, as well as capable of believing; all men love to feel, as well as to think; and in my gospel is an exciting and exalting power, adapted to the human mind, and to which, if permitted through appropriate instruction, it will every where respond, feeling that by the contact all its faculties of head and heart are refreshed.

Can we wonder that the eyes of the Redeemer, "which seemed to love whate'er they looked upon," as they met the popular gaze, held all spirits spell-bound? Is it strange that those tones of his which every where proclaimed that all rational beings have an equal right to live and enjoy elicited applause from the throbbing hearts on which they fell? The common people must have been something less or more than human to have resisted the power of wisdom so exalted, and love so impartial. He taught them to look into the everlasting mysteries of God's might, to be assimilated to infinite excellence, and thus to become divine. He created in the common people faith, that living power which grows by the struggles it encounters, and outruns the demands made upon it by the trials of life. As Elijah, who wore a rough garment, arose to heaven with chariot and horses of fire, so Christ would encourage the humblest of earth's children to aspire after celestial treasures of the greatest worth, through a career the most resplendent and full of beneficence. Standing in the presence of such a teacher and such a friend, the people saw God manifest in the flesh, who addressed a common nature,

aroused common emotions, and imparted common blessings, and whose life, as well as doctrines, proclaimed *a model worthy of being not only admired but imitated by all.*

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

IN HIS DEATH, THE DIVINE ATONER IN WHOM ALL ARE INVITED TO TRUST  
FOR THE HIGHEST FREEDOM AND IMMORTAL JOY.

WE have surveyed the infancy, the youth, the manhood, and the public ministry of Christ. It remains to consider the crowning act of his life on earth, and the results which thence emanate and spread through time and eternity. We believe that the divine Savior died for the wretched, whose sorrows he felt; atoned for the sinful, whose guilt he assumed; and triumphed alone on the cross in gloom, that he might open the gates of glory to all, and proffer to each a crown.

In the first place, Christ died for the wretched, whose sorrows he felt. The progressive character of his career was climacteric in the most interesting and sublime degree. The different traits of his life grew fairer and brighter at each successive development, until his person was invested with multifarious charms, each one perfect in itself, and all blended in a perfect whole; as celestial hues appear one after another only to consummate their beautiful union at last in the rainbow, spanning earth and touching heaven. If our Lord was more than human in his human growth, and infinitely beneficent in his earthly toils, he was indeed divine in the merits of his death, and in those consequences of his sacrifice which so intimately connect the destinies of our race with the councils and career of the Almighty.



Consider what difficulties the Redeemer had to encounter, and what a victory he won. Human nature, which was originally adapted to a union with the divine, had incurred a fearful obstruction, which interposed between this original design and its accomplishment: that obstruction, which necessitated the life and death of the Son of God, was *sin*. As it is the first truth of our religion, that this evil influence had obtained complete dominion over man, thus causing his immediate union with God to become impossible, it follows that the power of sin was first to be vanquished, annihilated within him, before reconciliation could result, and salvation be secured. But this, from the peculiar state of subjection in which man was held, could not be effected by his own effort; it must be the work of that Being alone, whose very nature renders him unassailable by sin, and supreme over it. He, therefore, through whom the Deity opens, as it were, afresh his intercourse with human nature, becomes necessarily the *Redeemer*, not from one special spiritual burden, pressing on one particular period, but from the burden which weighed down the whole human race, at all times and every where. The atonement which Christ effects is that of mankind with their holy Creator; and it is in this character we behold him invested with a special and unrivalled importance, a dignity the most attractive and divine.

Undoubtedly one of the greatest proofs of the heavenly origin of the gospel consists in the fact that it is prepared for all ages, the pioneer of all progress, and adapted to every condition of mankind. In it the moral law is every where laid down—great, simple, absolute, and positive. “For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” “So likewise ye, when ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” Then came Peter to him, and said, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I

forgive him ? till seven times ?” Jesus saith unto him, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times ; but, Until seventy times seven ;” that is, indefinitely, without reckoning the number of pardons. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith, which worketh by love.”

By the death of Christ, a basis has been laid for faith, and freedom won for its exercise ; so that every where the application of the law is left to the individual conscience, emancipated and enlightened by the Holy Spirit to be our guide. And when we remember that the gospel succeeded the Mosaic dispensation, which constitutes an immense and minute system of outward ceremonies and cumbrous discipline, it is impossible not to see the merciful hand of God in the difference — a difference which man, in his imprudence or his pride, has vainly attempted to efface. It is the aim of “the glorious gospel of the blessed God” to make our responsibility complete and entire ; and, in order that we may be responsible, we must be perfectly free — a condition won only by the death of Christ. It is in reference to the oppressive precepts of the Mosaic law, and the superior privileges of the gospel, that Paul observes, “Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.” James tells us that the law of Christ is the “perfect law of [moral] liberty,” the only sense which the context of the passage in which it occurs permits us to adopt ; and Paul has laid down the fundamental principles of Christian morality in these words : “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind . . . for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.”

Christ is every where described, in the sacred record, not so much a teacher as a doer. If he taught as never man taught, he did what only God could do ; he grappled the infinite evils of sin, and atoned for a world, that all men might be both teachers and doers of eternal truth. He was a light indeed, broad-shining and effective, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world ; the luminary supreme, which causes

what it shows, as well as shows what its genial beams have caused. The great Redeemer came to the rescue of fallen and oppressed man in the desperate hour of his need. And what treasures did he bring and bestow on the race whose sorrows he pitied most, because by him they were most deeply felt? He elevated the obscure and protected the weak, by teaching the common origin and sacred fraternity of mankind. He gave force to the imbecile, dignity to babes, and unwonted charms to woman, by unfolding the idea of a new and more exalted domestic law, and threw round all oppressed persons the highest and best munitions of safety and affection, by demonstrating, in life and death, that he came to set up the universal republic on earth, founded and governed by God. What could be more magical and sure in its effects on the popular heart? When Jesus Christ appeared, and from the deepest obscurity of Judea the all-embracing air had borne to the remotest regions his liberating influence, with what sacred hope did the human race tremble as it rose to hail his progress, gaze on his attractiveness, and listen to his words! Who wonders that the impotent strove to approach him, rose and walked? that the deaf leaned towards his lips, till his miraculous tones broke rapturously on their brain? Who wonders that children, females, laborers, slaves, the poor and despised of every class, country, and condition, gathered along the dusty highway which he covered with monuments of mercy, spreading their garments under his feet, waving boughs over his head, just before his death, and crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" That hosanna was the cry of deliverance, the response of abused humanity to Him who groaned over popular wrongs, sympathized with the better desires of the popular heart, lived and died in the defence of popular rights. That cry accorded well with the master purpose of the great Deliverer; in part, perhaps, fortified and rewarded it. There is a picture by Raphael which represents our Lord bowed down to the earth by the weight of his cross and his sufferings; but, in the

expression of the countenance, the artist has made visible an inward satisfaction, struggling over pain, that he is yet to save the world.

We have said that Christ died for the wretched, whose sorrows he felt. We proceed to remark, —

Secondly, he atoned for the sinful, whose guilt he assumed. We are to remember constantly that it was the criminality of man which occasioned the atonement of Christ; but for sin, the light and warmth of Eden would never have been changed into flames round the sword of the guardian angel, nor blazed in the terrors of expulsion at the forbidden threshold. This is the *abasing* truth of the gospel, which teaches us to rejoice in Christ chiefly *as a Savior*. By the same record in which our ruinous fall is proclaimed, the exalting process of complete redemption is also displayed. Said the Savior himself, at the institution of the commemorative supper, "This is my blood which is shed for you, for the remission of sins." "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." "He died to redeem us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "God has set him forth as a propitiation for sin, that he might be just, and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus." "He made reconciliation for the sins of the people." Schleusner, commenting on these passages, says, "Christ came an object of execration in our stead. He was made an expiatory offering, in the place of sinners, to procure their deliverance from the curse. Christ was sent of God, for the *express purpose* of undergoing death, as the cause of human salvation; and God has proposed Christ, as the *expiator*, or *expiatory victim*, expiating the sins of mankind, by a sacrifice offered."

The fact of our utter inability to atone for our own sins, and the fulness of redemption secured for us by the sacrifice of Christ, are well stated by Dr. Edwards, as follows: —

"The very idea of an atonement or satisfaction for sin, is something which, to the purposes of supporting the authority of the divine law, and the dignity and consistency of the divine government, is equivalent to the punishment of the

sinner, according to the literal threatening of the law. That which answers these purposes being done, whatever it be, atonement is made, and the way is prepared for the dispensation of pardon. In any such case, *God can be just, and yet the justifier of the sinner*. And that that which is sufficient to answer these purposes, has been done for us according to the gospel plan, I presume none can deny who believe that the eternal 'Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,' and that he, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of God, 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' and 'gave himself a sacrifice to God for us.'

"But perhaps some, who may readily grant that what Christ hath done and suffered is undoubtedly sufficient to atone for the sins of his people, may also suppose that, if God had seen fit so to order it, we might have made a sufficient atonement for our own sins. Or, whether they believe in the reality and sufficiency of the atonement of Christ or not, they may suppose that we might have atoned, or even now may atone, for our own sins. This hypothesis, therefore, demands our attention.

"If we could have atoned, by any means, for our own sins, it must have been either by our *repentance* and *reformation*, or by *enduring a punishment*, less in degree or duration than that which is threatened in the law as the wages of sin. No other way for us to atone for our own sins appears to be conceivable. But, if we attend to the subject, we shall find that we can make no proper atonement in either of these ways."

Thus conditioned, where is our hope? It is in God, whose Son descends from heaven, takes upon him the nature of man, suffers in his stead, and, having consented that the whole burden of offended justice should be laid upon him, bears it in his own body on the tree, that the Father may be glorified, the law magnified and made honorable, by pouring out his soul unto death for all who trust in his blood. He ascended on high, and, by the arm that was lacerated on the cross, now energized with everlasting strength, he has levelled the wall of partition

which traversed and darkened the path of redemption, so that now every barrier on the part of God is done away, and he, with untarnished glory, can dispense forgiveness over the whole extent of a guilty creation, and pour balm upon every penitent heart. On this theme Robert Hall has spoken with his wonted piety and eloquence. Said he,—

“The conclusion to which we are conducted is confirmed by inspiration, which assures us that a great revolution has actually befallen the species; and that, in consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, we have incurred the forfeiture of the divine favor and the loss of the divine image. In this situation, it is not difficult to perceive that the economy adapted to our relief must include two things—the means of expiating guilt, and the means of moral renovation; in other words, an atoning sacrifice and a sanctifying spirit. Both these objects are accomplished in the advent of the Savior, who, by presenting himself as a sin-offering, has made ample satisfaction to offended justice, and purchased, by his merits, the renovating spirit which is freely offered to as many as sincerely seek it. By the former, the obstructions to our happiness arising from the divine nature are removed; by the latter, the disqualification springing from our own. By providing a sacrifice of infinite value in the person of the only-begotten, he has consulted his majesty as the righteous governor of the world, and has reconciled the seemingly incompatible claims of justice and of mercy. By bestowing the Spirit as the fruit of *his* mediation and intercession whose *soul was made an offering for sin*, pollution is purged, and that image of God restored to sinful creatures, which capacitates them for the enjoyment of pure and perfect felicity. Thus every requisite which we can conceive necessary in a restorative dispensation is found in the gospel, exhibited with a perspicuity level to the meanest capacity, combined with such a depth in the contrivance, and such an exquisite adaptation to our state and condition, as surpasses finite comprehension. This is the substance of those glad tidings which constitute the *gospel*, to the cordial reception of

which must all the difference be ascribed which will shortly be found between the condition of the saved and the lost.

“Be assured, my Christian brethren, it is by a profound submission of the soul to this doctrine, offensive as it may be to the pride of human virtue, repugnant as it undoubtedly is to the dictates of philosophy, falsely so called, that we must *acquaint ourselves with God, and be at peace*. When we mention peace, however, we mean not the stupid security of a mind that refuses to reflect; we mean a tranquillity which rests upon an unshaken basis; which no anticipations, however remote, no power of reflection, however piercing or profound, no evolutions which time may disclose or eternity conceal, are capable of impairing; a peace which is founded on the oath and promise of Him who cannot lie; which, springing from the consciousness of an ineffable alliance with the Father of spirits, makes us to share in his fulness, to become a partner with him in his eternity; a repose, pure and serene as the unruffled wave, which reflects the heavens from its bosom, while it is accompanied with a feeling of exultation and triumph natural to such as are conscious that, ere long, having overcome, they shall possess all things.

“While the prize is so transcendently great, no unparalleled efforts, no incredible exertions, are requisite to obtain it; it is placed within the grasp of every hand. If the great sacrifice had not been presented, if the succors of Heaven had not been offered, if the glad tidings had not been proclaimed, nor life and immortality brought to light, our condition would indeed have been deplorable; and little encouragement should we have had to engage in the great work of seeking salvation. But now *all things are ready*, and the chief, or rather the only prerequisite is a childlike docility, a disposition to derive wisdom from the fountain of light, strength from the strong, together with a fixed and immovable conviction that the care of our eternal interests is the grand concern.”

Hall, like the great apostle, spoke with the greatest confidence, in contrasting the vain sacrifices of the law with the

inherent sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He has effected for believers an entire exemption from all liability to punishment, and procured for them a title to the blessedness of heaven, because he was the Son of God; and the heirs of grace are one with him, the sufferings of the Redeemer are to be regarded as vicarious, that he appeared in the character of a substitute for sinners, in distinction from a mere example, teacher, or martyr. Only as we thus embrace the atonement, both penitently and actively trusting in its merits, can we believe to the saving of the soul.

Such views are the life and power of the gospel. They constitute the chief efficiency of the pulpit every where, and were well exemplified in the preaching of the great man to whom we have just referred. Dr. Gregory, in describing Hall's removal to Cambridge, where he had to encounter the pernicious antinomianism of his predecessor, remarks, —

"Attentive to the voice of heavenly admonition, thus addressing him from various quarters, he entered upon his new duties with earnest desires that he might be able 'to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Feeling that to him was consigned the charge of transforming, with God's assistance, a cold and sterile soil into a fruitful field, he determined not to satisfy himself with half measures, but proceeded to expose error, and defend what he regarded as essential truth. The first sermon, therefore, which he delivered at Cambridge, after he had assumed the office of pastor, was on the doctrine of the atonement and its practical tendencies. Immediately after the conclusion of the service, one of the congregation, who had followed poor Mr. Robinson through all his changes of sentiment, went into the vestry, and said,



‘Mr. Hall, this preaching won’t do for us ; it will only suit a congregation of old women.’ ‘Do you mean my sermon, sir, or the doctrine?’ ‘Your doctrine.’ ‘Why is it that the *doctrine* is fit only for old women?’ ‘Because it may suit the musings of people tottering upon the brink of the grave, and who are eagerly seeking comfort.’ ‘Thank you, sir, for your concession. The doctrine will not *suit* people of *any* age, unless it be true ; and, if it *be true*, it is not fitted for old women alone, but is equally important at *every* age.’”

A negro boy, when informed by his teacher that God had sent his Son to die for the world, replied, “O massa, me no wonder at that ; it be just like him.” Yes, the untutored child of nature feels that “God is love ;” the pupil of Providence learns the same great truth at every step ; but it is for the happy subject of redemption to repeat with unutterable delight, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” Love is the mightiest inspiration in the weakest of mortals. What, then, shall be its power and products, when, in behalf of a lost race, it is exercised by the Almighty himself ! Herein is love, that “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” In a late disaster on the lake, a benevolent individual was swimming with a mother and child. Becoming exhausted, he inquired which he should drop, and the mother replied, “Drop *me*.” In a more fearful emergency, He who is mighty to save exclaimed, “Spare the rebel from going down to the pit. Lo, I have found a ransom !”

“He had joined the offending nature to his own, for the distinct and deliberate object of pouring out the blood which flowed through its veins, and of making its soul an offering for sin. His whole life was only a preface to his death. Having taken a survey of all that would be required from the Surety of sinners ; having cast up and pondered the mighty sum of

guilt to be cancelled, and measured with his eye the thunder-stores of wrath which must be exhausted, and fathomed the pit which to them was bottomless, — he pressed the entire responsibility to his heart, and addressed himself to the task. Our nature, to him, was a robe of suffering, assumed expressly that, when the crisis of our redemption came, Justice might find him sacrificially attired and prepared for the altar, a substance which her sword could smite, a victim which could agonize and die. And, if the human soul admits of an indefinite enlargement in its capacity of pleasure and pain; if the admission of the purified spirit to the uncreated splendor above augments that capacity to such a degree that almost an infinitude of emotion can be compressed into the space of a moment, — what must have been the measureless capability of the human soul which he took into so perfect a union with his divinity, that the two natures composed only one person? What must have been the acquired intensity of its antipathy to sin, and what the consequent intensity of his exceeding sorrow, when, being in an agony, he had, in a sense, to absorb the infinite mass of human guilt, and to exhaust, in one short moment, the mighty cup of omnipotent wrath!”

Christ came to make a new world by changing the moral character of its inhabitants. His cross was the throne of love inexhaustible and unconfined. He loved, toiled, died for the whole world. He loved man for his own sake, all men without exception or exclusion. His ministry was elevated, like the mount from which he taught; unlimited, like the heavens above which he would raise the hearts of all our race. His temple was universal nature, his congregation the promiscuous representatives of every class of mankind; and the truths he imparted, like the blessed influences of sunshine and rain, fell on each and all alike. “This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” This alone can cure the conscience, cleanse the heart, wipe away the tear of sorrow, sanctify the soul, and fill it with the joys of heaven. And this the gospel can do, since it is the

revelation of one whose arm is almighty - to save, and whose heart embraces every child of fallen Adam. As the representative of the Father, our blessed Lord offers this gift to all. "Human reason, arguing from the limited appropriation of the priceless benefit, would infer that the extent of the love which provided, and the value of the means which procured it, are limited also; would examine them by the torture of its logic, and bring its insignificant line to the measurement of boundless grace. Human selfishness would make a monopoly of eternal life. The Jewish Christians would fain have made it a local and national benefit; till the unconfined spirit came and showed them that, like the air, it belonged to the world. And the inheritors of their selfishness, in every succeeding age, have attempted to number Israel, to count the people; have adhered to the persuasion that the great gift of eternal life is only to be offered to a party. But an attempt to imprison the air, and to enchain the light, would be wise and salutary compared with this."

Christ died for the wretched, whose sorrows he felt; he thus atoned for the sinful, whose guilt he assumed. Having considered these points, let us proceed to remark, —

Thirdly, that he triumphed alone on the cross in gloom, in order to throw wide open the gates of glory to all, and proffer to each a crown.

Jesus Christ was the representative of the Deity in this lower world, the Savior by his incarnation, divine spirituality embodied and made palpable to all the spiritual faculties of man. "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time," said Christ, "nor seen his shape;" that is, as an infinite spirit he can have neither outline nor dimensions, and yet he who thus spake was so literally the manifestation of Jehovah, that Paul characterized him as "the image of the invisible God." He was the image, in the same sense as he was the word, of the Almighty. What speech is to thought, that is the incarnate Son to the invisible Father. Thought, with unseen wing, can traverse space, fly to and fro through the universe, and pass instantane-

ously from one outer bound to another, without being discerned in its mighty careerings by the eye of man. But speech is thought manifested, inbodied in palpable shape, and rendered sensible to the multitudes who could not apprehend it in its secret workings and silent flight. Thus the Son is the manifested Father, and fitly termed "the Word;" since the relation between the incarnate Son and the Father is the same as that between speech and thought; the one embodying and making intelligible the other to the simplest mind. It was this that the world most needed, because without some sensible representation of the divine Being, the understanding can make no approach to him, and the affections have nothing to embrace. "Faith itself, like the dove of the deluge, has nothing on which it can alight; it finds itself voyaging in an objectless universe, an infinite vacuity; and piety must suffer and pine as in an atmosphere too subtle and unsubstantial for its present earthly constitution."

But He who had been from eternity in the bosom of the Father, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, appears the representative, and the only adequate representative, of the divine character. Invested with a body which God had prepared, and not man, he claimed to himself the exclusive power of unveiling those perfections which are the groundwork and pledge of eternal life. "No man," said he, "knoweth the Father except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." He who alone blended humanity immaculate and the fulness of the Godhead in himself, felt that he could control the salvation of the world, and that the illumination of mankind was within his power, by virtue of the attributes placed entirely at his discretion. And what did he do?—that wonderful Being whom "they shall call Emanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." "We are in him that is true, even in his Son

Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." It was indeed for no work of slight importance that Christ was manifested in the flesh. It was not to found exclusive schools of recondite wisdom, or bless favorite sections of the world, that he came. He was with us, partaking of the divine nature and our own, that he might save our common race from its lost condition, restore to life the dead, and transport to heaven those who had become the prey of hell. "Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." If to create a race like ourselves was a wonderful work, to save us from the guilt we had incurred, and the eternal misery we deserved, was a divine task wonderful indeed. The Father created every thing that is by his word; the Son redeemed, by an ineffable sacrifice, the human race condemned; and the Holy Spirit concurred, by the infusion of his grace, to the sanctification of man purchased with blood divine. Briefly stated, this is the summary of all religion, the substance of ancient faith, the accomplishment of the hopes of the world, which Jesus Christ came to save. "Whosoever believes in him, is not condemned; but whosoever believeth not on him, is already condemned; because he believes not in the name of the only Son of God."

Circumstances of hereditary prejudice, local laws, and partisan education, may modify the legitimate influence of Christianity on the souls of men, but they cannot narrow the infinite amplitude of its source, nor long degrade the ultimate dignity of its power. The sunlight, indeed, produces a different effect upon the eye, as it passes through the painted glass of palatial halls and cathedral altars, from that which it bears when it flies unimpeded and untinged through the transparent air. The flowing stream may have different hues upon its surface, reflected from the blue canopy of heaven or the clouds which float beneath; but sky, stream, and sunlight are in themselves the same, perpetual, boundless, and free, bestowed, like God's highest gift to humanity, without respect to station or class. The offers, gifts, and graces of Christianity are not for one, or

for a few. They are proffered to all. Even when the gospel is preached to a single individual, it is offered to him as to one of a great household. Not only man, but, says Paul, the whole creation, is included in the consequences of the fall: so also are all included in the change wrought by redemption. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." Christianity is redemption and reconciliation, by virtue of the union of Christ with God; it becomes salvation to the believer, by the union of his penitent and faith-inspired soul with Christ. The condemnation of the law is averted, since the great Atoner died in the sinner's stead. It is this grand truth which constitutes the deepest significance of Christianity, which makes it a *gospel* to those that believe therein, love which alone can give life to something superior to the dead forms of Judaism; and when this is done, as in the life of Christ, the law becomes written in the heart, a vital principle thenceforth destined neither to condemn nor destroy. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." The utmost effort of the dispensation of types and shadows was only a preluding overture, till he should come to lead a loftier song, who had said, "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

"He took up the strain at a point beyond which creation would have carried it. His voice gave the key-note to the universe. His description of the divine character furnished words for the new, everlasting, universal song. His unconfined power; his unsearchable understanding; his holiness, on which no spot, no shadow could settle, and which the eyes of wickedness could not gaze on for its brightness; his untiring

patience ; his constant community with the general heart of man, which he wept over and bathed in tears ; his meekness clothed with majesty ; his personification of infinite love, — these were the several parts of the harmonious song. All the attributes in him became vocal, and made infinite music in the ear of that glorious Being in whom they eternally reside. Each myriad-voiced rank of the church above, overflowing with joy, took up the mighty, whelming, ocean strain ; the church below redoubled, and returned it back again in alleluias to the throne of God ; age after age has heard it swelling on, as lisping infancy, and newly-pardoned penitence, and misery beguiled of its woes, and ingratitude charmed into thankfulness, and hope spreading her pinions for heaven, and all the new-born heirs of grace, have awoke up their glory, and joined the general choir ; and on it shall continue to roll and swell, attuning and gathering to itself all the harmonies of nature ; till all space shall become a temple ; and all holy beings, actuated by one spirit, and swayed in perfect diapason, shall become one great instrument, sounding forth praise to God in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

A redemption is the correction or renewal of a creation, and consequently must be what the nature of the creation requires. It is a remedy whose speciality depends on that of the evil which it proposes to cure. The terms which express this idea, are those which in particular characterize the language of the gospel. "For we [Christians] are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "And be renewed [as Christ taught you] in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." And Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The idea of a redeemer is intimately associated with that of a creator ; the one depends upon the other ; two terms necessarily united and correlative forever. This great principle is as significant as it is simple, and may be expressed in the infinite formula :

As God, so Christ. "The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." "Who, [the Son,] being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," was "the exact image of the invisible God." Consequently, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;" that is, knoweth not the Father so as to be united to him; "but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." It follows that Jesus was entitled to make the requisition of all in absolute terms: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The first announcement of redemption was general; it was a promise which belonged to the whole family of man, and had nothing in its origin either peculiar or special. God said to the serpent, the type of evil, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In this passage, universal redemption is foretold in the most appropriate manner. "The seed of the serpent" we may consider as representing evil of all kinds, perpetrated from generation to generation; "the seed of the woman" signifies mankind; the enmity spoken of is the universal struggle which mortals have to maintain against evil; the inevitable bruise is an image of the sufferings which must always be experienced in this struggle; the complete victory, the crushing of the serpent's head and venomous fangs, is an image of the triumph over evil, achieved by our Lord, and of which all mankind enjoy the fruits; all is universal—the conflict, the wound, and the triumph. What was true of the first promulgation, is also true of the actual accomplishment of redemption in its perfect, Christian form; it has nothing exclusive or particular, and is in no respect national, but, by its own intrinsic nature, is nationalized every where. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all."

Providence prepared afar off the way for free and full



salvation. We see its light faintly dawning, even in the age when Solomon erected the temple of a local and national religion. In the prayer of dedication, the king, acting as priest, says, "Moreover, concerning the stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; . . . when he shall come and pray toward this house: Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all the people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee." Isaiah proclaims the rights of even eunuchs, (who, in whatever manner they had become so, were not considered as Jewish citizens.) "Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord, . . . Those that choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant, even unto them will I give, in mine house and within my walls a place." Another striking passage in the same prophet opened to the Mosaic system a vast perspective of expansion. "In that day shall five cities [the definite for the indefinite number] in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan [that is, the language of the worship of the true God,] and swear to the Lord of Hosts. . . . And the Lord shall be known to Egypt. . . . In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, [frequent and intimate communication,] . . . and the Egyptians shall serve the Lord with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria." It was impossible more effectually to overthrow ancient particularism than by placing Israel as *the third* with strange nations in the service of the true God. The law of Moses had its court for the men, more sacred and nearer to the sanctuary than that of the women, because it recognized a shade of distinction in holiness between the sexes. All ancient religions had sacred localities, contracted creeds, and bigoted priests, ready to condemn all not born of their own caste, and sworn to their own ritual. But Christianity came

to receive all nations and ranks by the same title, into the same church, and lead them towards the same immortality.

As is redemption so is revelation, its evidence and record to man. As God has granted to all a remedy equal to the evil of sin, so has he granted light equivalent to the importance of the work, which is the Bible. From this, saving thought reaches the soul of the believer, as the sun's rays reach his eyes. It has pleased God by religious, biblical teaching, to save them that believe. If one denies inspiration because he cannot trace its path to the human mind, in order to be consistent, he ought to deny light because he cannot explain the manner it penetrates to the bottom of the eye, and through a dark avenue kindles the brain. It is much farther from the retina which covers the interior of the visual organ to the globe of the sun, than from the soul of a sincere inquirer to the spirit of God. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The world is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach." "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "God is light," says John; that is to say, perfection, which is the signification of this term, often employed in this sense by Greek writers. There is nothing more beautiful than light, nothing more mysterious, nothing more necessary, nothing more universally diffused. In this respect is light the best symbol of our holy and expansive religion, which courts investigation, promotes and rewards it; never more powerful than when in contact with the highest improvement. It was at the doors of the great centres of the civilization of antiquity — Antioch, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and Alexandria — that it first knocked to obtain admission, and thence flowed out in augmented streams of intelligence round the globe. All the enterprising nations of antiquity

inhabited the countries washed by the Mediterranean: their cities studded its coasts; their fleets ploughed its billows; the commerce of the fairest and most potent ideas took place for ages along its shores, or from coast to coast; the pagan Olympus was reflected in its waves, and the genius of activity seems to have emerged thence, as the goddess of beauty was fabled there to have been born. It is a very significant fact, that, at the extremity of this great inland sea, and at an equal distance from the three continents—consequently in the very centre of the known world—God placed the theatre of redemption. This took place, too, at the fearful moment when evil had reached its culminating point; when imagination could conceive no excess left untried; when the intellect despaired of truth, conscience of morality, and hope of religion,—when the manifest symptoms of spiritual decay appeared to be consummate in the human race, and nothing but the cross of Christ could arrest the descent of a revolted world to eternal woe.

Surely a godlike redemption was requisite to meet the emergency in which man was placed by sin, and this seems to have been felt by the thoughtful of every nation and age. Cicero, who in his Republic painted so eloquently the grandeur of human nature, could not fail of being struck with the astonishing contrasts presented by that nature, subjected to so many miseries, maladies, griefs, fears, and devouring passions; so that, compelled to recognize something *divine* in man so unhappy and so degraded, he called him *a soul in ruins*. The Chinese have a tradition that once *man revolted against his Maker*: then the columns of heaven were broken; the earth shook to its lowest foundations; the system of the universe was deranged; the general harmony was disturbed; calamities and crimes inundated the earth. But if men the most benighted, as well as men the most enlightened, have ever known and acknowledged their degradation, they have always hoped also to be one day reestablished in their primitive state, and this has sustained their courage. All nations

have lived in expectation of a Redeemer, a mysterious and divine person, who, according to traditions and sacred oracles, should bring them deliverance and reconciliation to God. This the world has received in the marvellous riches and power of the gospel, which, by the grandeur and fruitful simplicity of its doctrines, develops and renovates reason; by the perfection of its morality, imparts a permanent base to wholesome laws; by the sublimity of its worship, unites man closely to God, without reflecting on infinite justice and without flattering human pride;—a glorious blending of truth and righteousness, which from so much corruption causes exalted virtues to arise; which before immense misery places merciful love as immense, a Redeemer to expiate all, a Mediator to sanctify all, a godlike salvation to shower on all blessings every way inexhaustible and divine. The primary truth of the gospel is, that “Christ tasted death for every man; he gave himself a ransom for all.” Even the Gentiles, who were without the benefit of an outward revelation, were by no means destitute of an inward knowledge of the law of God, and some of them showed “the work of the law written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness.” “Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Hence we may infer that as the Father appointed the death of the Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, so all men receive through Christ a measure of moral and spiritual light, and all have their day of gracious visitation. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is revealed in the Bible, is designed for the whole world; it is adapted to men of every condition, clime, and character; all are invited to avail themselves of its benefits; all who will come, may come, and “take the water of life freely.”

If the fountains of life are absolutely sealed to a single mortal; if one of our race, without some crime of his own grounded on free choice abused, searches in vain for the light of which he has need, and, opening his ear, does not hear the voice of God speaking within, then redemption, it must be

confessed, is not universal; and, very distinctly let us add, such a fact would be the most frightful of all, at once anti-divine and anti-human. But we have not so learned Christ. We rejoice with exceeding joy in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Mediator, and trust confidently in the atonement made by "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." We can conceive of no right and availing preparedness for the vast hereafter, but such as is grounded by faith in the one perfect Sacrifice, through renovation from the one infinite Spirit, inspiring constant devotion to the service and honor of the one Almighty God. We look to Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing unto them their trespasses; see him lift off from the men of this guilty planet the burden of the violated law, bearing it himself in his own body on the tree, that he may magnify that law, and make it honorable: we hear him proclaim a full release from all its tremendous penalties, but in such a way that the truth which declared them, and the justice which should execute them, remain untainted under a dispensation of mercy, and feel that the mild, peaceful light of the Sun of Righteousness, shining benignly on all, has greatest power to melt the obdurate into penitence, and the believing into joy. True religion is perfect reconciliation, and is every way reciprocal in its influence, as well as ennobling in its effects. In Christ, all our powers, all our faculties, are brought to unite with God. He knows, and we are made wise unto salvation. He is holy, and the sinner is accepted through the imputed righteousness of the sinless Redeemer. He is supremely happy, and the sanctified soul, having partaken of the divine nature, shares forever in the felicity of the highest divinity whom it serves and adores. Thus Christianity is a bond which time cannot loosen nor eternity outlast, and if man holds one extremity of the chain, God holds the other.

The mysterious constitution of the person of Christ, and the glorious atonement consequent upon his sacrifice, form the stupendous link which unites God and man, earth and heaven; that mystic ladder, on which the angels of God ascended and

descended, whose foot is in the dust of our sinful world, and whose summit scales the pinnacles of celestial glory. Fully to comprehend the obscure wonders of this theme is a task and a privilege reserved for the future state; the nature of the case forbids a perfect comprehension. Says Robert Hall, —

“It is the greatness which forms the mystery of the fact; the matchless love and condescension constitute the very nucleus of the difficulty. It could only be brought within the sphere of our comprehension by a contraction of its vast dimensions, by a depression of its native grandeur. A prostration of it to the level of our feeble capacities would only render it incapable of being the magnet of souls, the attraction of hearts, the wonder of the universe. The effect of this great fact on every one who has sufficient humility to believe the word of God, is not at all diminished by its mysterious grandeur. On the contrary, the fact itself is replete with moral influence and practical effect. Could the whole theory of the incarnation be laid open to our view, no additional force would be given to those motives to fervent gratitude and devotedness to the service of our Redeemer which the mere fact is adapted to inspire. The practical influence is not at all impaired, but rather heightened, by the speculative difficulties which attend it, because they result merely from its ineffable grandeur. The same may be said with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity. The distinct parts assigned to the three divine persons exhibit the beautiful harmony of the plan of redemption; the Father sending his Son, the Son executing his Father’s will, the Holy Spirit sanctifying the people of God by dwelling in their hearts. These truths are not less practical because of the mystery which attends the doctrine. We are as able to adore the grace of the Father, the love of the Son, the communion of the Holy Spirit, to value the distinct agency of the several persons in the work of our salvation, as if we could perceive the theory of this unspeakable mystery.

“With regard to the doctrine of the atonement, we are taught all that it is necessary for us to know — that the blood of Jesus

Christ is the price of our redemption, and that it was infinitely worthy of God, 'in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' We can perceive, in some degree, its tendency to advance and maintain the honor of God, as Moral Governor of the world. But many questions may be proposed, with respect to the extent of its efficacy, which our reason cannot penetrate. What connection this great sacrifice may have with the happiness, what influence on the destiny, of beings of a higher order, of which the Scriptures give some faint intimation, we have no distinct and satisfactory knowledge; but this affords no objection to the testimony they contain, that 'for us *men*, and for *our* salvation,' the Son of God became incarnate, suffered, and died. It is worthy of the reserve of Infinite Majesty to give us very brief hints with respect to the influence of these great facts on the innocent and holy part of creation, to the utmost extent of his dominions."

It is with the practical character of the atonement, rather than with its speculative aspects, that we as sinners have to do; and it is enough for us to know that, however far the radiance of the cross may flow beyond the domains of humanity, it at least includes all our race. Christianity was designed for the whole world, not merely as a system of instruction, but an awakening, an appeal, the means and source of spiritual life. Its Founder taught every truth, performed every miracle, employed every agency, moved every part of the universe, exhibited every perfection of the divine character, which was in the least essential to the instruction and salvation of mankind. True Christian liberty consists in a common gospel for all, unfolding its sacred records for general instruction, and bestowing the spirit of all grace to seal each believer unto eternal life. It does not necessarily follow that all will avail themselves of the means of salvation which infinite love has so amply provided, or that all the disciples of our blessed Lord attain unto the same degree of progress, but that resources adapted to every possible want are proffered to each without

money or price. "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ;" and it is Christ "from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." We can no more conceive of the means of salvation being limited, than we can conceive of a limit to the affections of an infinite God; the capaciousness of both of which gloriously characterizes the whole New Testament, and at its close bursts forth in the overwhelming eloquence of mercy and love, the epitome of the entire gospel: "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Herein we have attempted to show that Christ died for the wretched, whose sorrows he felt; that he thereby atoned for the sinful, whose guilt he assumed; and that he triumphed alone on the cross in gloom, that he might open the gates of glory to all, and proffer to each a crown. From this whole discussion we deduce three points.

First, the divine atonement is unlimited, and all of us should avail ourselves of its saving power. We are aware that some think this a too generous view of the gospel. They profess to believe that its worth is vitiated, and its Author dishonored, by such a wide expansion and comprehensive grasp. They look rather for a monopoly of heavenly grace, and will be very sure to regard themselves, the special and selected favorites of predestined life. Christ found the earth burdened with such, and strove with all his might to drive them from the altars they disgraced, while standing and thanking God heartlessly that they were not as other men are; and planted purer examples along the highway of salvation, which they encumbered in arrogant and hypocritical display of fine morality, not



in their daily life, but patched on their garment's filthy hem. These were the bigots of an earlier age, who were accustomed to speak of themselves as chosen of God, before all meaner creatures, holy and clean; while the Gentile nations were sinners beyond the reach of salvation, reprobate dogs. And why was this? It was because they, like the Pharisees of modern times, clung to the dogma, "out of *their* church, no salvation;" the latent principle of death in all those sects which have embraced or ever do embrace such a creed.

The immediate influence of teaching like this is bad enough, leading the hearer stupidly to wait for conversion, if that chances to be "a fixed fact" in his case, as a dead tree stands on a dreary mountain top to be struck by lightning, should a sovereign cloud, in passing, vouchsafe it an irresistible bolt. But the hereditary influence of such doctrine is, if possible, still more pernicious. Who can read, without horror, the statements in some standard works? One says, "God by his own will has made the frightful difference between the elect and the reprobate." Another asserts that "God needed, anterior to the foresight of original sin, to predestinate some and condemn others; all this is arbitrary in God." While a third, still more orthodox in the faith of that age, declares, "Jesus Christ no more died for the salvation of those who are not elected, than he died for the salvation of the devil." It was only one step farther that a disciple of the same school went, when, at the funeral of a woman who died in childbirth, he stated, for the edification of the faithful and consolation of all the bereaved, that "it is certain that the devil possesses the soul of a little infant in the womb of its mother." This theology, in all its glory every where, we think, comes from Man, and not from Jesus Christ. It has little affinity for the cross, when he who dies thereon, the Savior of the world, cries, "It is finished" — the veil of the temple is rent in twain, and every barrier between the ranks of men broken down — in this preternatural gloom the Sun of Righteousness is apparently extinguished here in this place of a skull, overlooking the metropolis of a limited

dispensation henceforth dead, only to kindle every star of heaven, every page of Scripture, and every rood of earth all a-blaze with the light of salvation for every eye. It is here, on the ragged irons, in the expiring moanings of Him "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," and "who tastes death for every man," that a meaning high as heaven, deep as hell, and wide as the outskirts of creation, is given to his own gracious words: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The living heavens shout with thousands of angel voices round the throne, and a glory of love gushes out over the universe, which shortly before had fastened its looks upon a fearful place of sacrifice."

In the second place, redemption does not infringe upon free will, and all should profit to the utmost by its sanctifying and ennobling influence. Since freedom of action is the principal and indispensable means of progress, the very object of redemption is to lead men to, and confirm them in, the path of perpetual advancement. From the very dawn of the gospel, the free use which would be made of it was announced: "Simeon said unto Mary, his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against." To be compelled to carry the cross of Christ is not to "take up" his cross. In his lamentation over Jerusalem, whose inhabitants he "would have gathered together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings," Jesus utters the simple but terrible reproach, "ye would not." This free use of Christianity goes even so far, that, from being the chief instrument of peace, it may be perverted to the occasion of war; this Jesus declared: "Think not I am come to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what shall I if it be already kindled?" It is as an explicit recognition of free will under the

power of redemption, that the angel says to the apostle : " He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Christianity leaves the mind of the individual, as well as the civilization of the masses, to its own free course of development, sure that the divine principles of purity and love it implants will suffice to moderate and guide it, so that excesses of all kinds and differences repugnant to its spirit, of every degree, will be either restrained or averted. Independent of every thing earthly, temporal, and transient ; independent of nature, which is merely the domain on which it toils and its progress is accomplished ; and independent of mankind, which is its pupil and beneficiary, Christianity is divine, and therefore cannot be destroyed ; it is the soul and substance of perfect freedom, and therefore is too mighty for sectarian chains, and too capacious for exclusive creeds. It is a beneficent and all-blessing spirit, like the sun shining on the imbecile and blind. It gently permeates the arteries and veins of the whole social system, softens manners, calms hatred, enlarges sympathy, expands benevolence, and every way exalts and ennobles the soul. Let us be most anxious to imbibe this influence, and thus become " filled with all the fulness of God."

Thirdly, Christianity being designed for the world, it is our first duty and highest privilege to exert our utmost powers in diffusing this invaluable treasure among all mankind. Every one who truly receives the gospel, and by it is made anew after God's image, has, by the very nature of his renovated affections, an inclination and indescribable joy in rendering the gift of inspiration saving to others, as it has been to himself. This sentiment was sublimely expressed by the apostle Paul : " Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Yea, and if I be offered on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" — he the missionary, they his supporters, and co-workers at home, all loving and toiling together to fill the earth with the

knowledge of Jesus Christ. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The means of distribution are *earthen*, adapted to every section of our globe, and the most solemn obligations require that the disciples of Christ should go every where, diffusing light, life, and immortal joy. This is God's gift to humanity, and is to be bestowed without respect to condition or rank. We are appointed to carry out, along every meridian and through every zone, the whole Bible and the gospel entire, not the religion of a sect or section, but the Christianity of Christ, a divinely original, majestic, beneficent, godlike type, as it is found in Jesus of Nazareth, and is destined to be exemplified in all the world.

## PART II.

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### THE REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

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“Being persuaded of nothing more than of this, that whether it be in matter of speculation or of practice, no untruth can possibly avail the patron and defender long, and that things most truly are likewise most behovefully spoken.” — *Hooker's Polity*.

“To endeavor to impose our sentiments by force, is the most detestable species of persecution. Others are as much entitled to deem themselves in the right as we are.” — *Godwin's Political Justice*.

“They who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles, than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds.” — *Paley's Moral Philosophy*.

“Christianity will civilize, it is true; but it is only when it is allowed to develop the energies by which it sanctifies. Christianity will inconceivably ameliorate the condition of being. Who doubts it? Its universal prevalence, not in name, but in reality, will convert this world into a semi-paradisiacal state; but it is only while it is permitted to prepare its inhabitants for a better. Let her be urged to forget her celestial origin and destiny, — to forget that she came from God, and returns to God; and, whether employed by the artful and enterprising, as the instrument of establishing a spiritual empire and dominion over mankind, or by the philanthropist, as the means of promoting their civilization and improvement, she resents the foul indignity, claps her wings, and takes her flight, leaving nothing but a base and sanctimonious hypocrisy in her room.” — *Hall's Address to Eustace Carey*.

“La révolution est tout entière dans l'Évangile. Nulle part la cause du peuple n'a été plus énergiquement plaidée, nulle part plus de malédictions n'ont été infligées aux riches et aux puissants de ce monde. Jésus Christ est notre maître à tous.” — *Les Girondins*.

“My kingdom is not of this world.”

“Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” — *Jesus Christ*.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHURCH WITHOUT A KING.

THE policy of kings and the avarice of priests have ever sought to blend religion with civil power, and make the church an appendage of the state. But every such attempt has served only to emasculate Christianity of its true force, and utterly to destroy its greatest glory. Such results might indeed be expected; since, as John records, Jesus himself declared,—“My kingdom is not of this world.” When human power subordinates the altar as a prop to its throne, earthly majesty is sure to receive much more of the incense than the King of heaven, whose divine prerogative alone it is to govern the spirits of men. That kingdom, whose comprehensive rule embraces at once the highest and the lowest ranks of our race, has nothing to do with our petty affairs of state, and seeks no protection save the right of free discussion, and unimpeded intercourse with all mankind.

Such, doubtless, were the nature and original design of our holy religion; but its high use and beneficent influence have as yet been but partially enjoyed. Primitive purity was soon corrupted, and secular alliances fearfully dwarfed and degraded those ennobling institutions which were vouchsafed to disenthral and bless the world. Let us glance at the history of the alliance between church and king; the nature of this relationship; and its results.

In the first place, our discussion requires an historical glance at the great evil the world has so long had occasion to deplore. But it is not our intention to go into minute details. All intelligent persons are familiar with the circumstances under which Constantine, in the fourth century of the Christian era, seized

upon supreme power in ecclesiastical as well as civil affairs, and in his own person exercised absolute control over both. Others succeeded him in like domination, increasing the pressure of their sway, and darkening the world. But despite the evil influence of imperial dictation, Christianity for a long time maintained something of its primitive elasticity, and nobly resisted the oppression it endured. In her darkest hour and most crippled condition, she was conservative of all that was valuable in the past, and the herald of a much more auspicious future. Numerous laws and facts might be cited to show very strikingly, that between the Roman municipal system and that of the free cities of the middle ages, there intervened an ecclesiastical municipal system; the preponderance of the clergy in conducting civil affairs succeeded to that of the ancient Roman magistrates, and paved the way for the organization of our modern free institutions. It is easy to see that the church gained a vast accession of power by these means, not only within its own appropriate sphere, but also in the circles of those with whom it united in temporal matters. It is from this period its influence began powerfully to promote the advance of modern civilization.

Says Guizot, "It was of immense advantage to European civilization that a moral influence, a moral power, a power resting entirely upon moral convictions, upon moral opinions and sentiments, should have established itself in society, just at this period, when it seemed upon the point of being crushed by the overwhelming physical force which had taken possession of it. Had not the Christian church at this time existed, the whole world must have fallen a prey to mere brute force. The Christian church alone possessed a moral power; it maintained and promulgated the idea of a precept, of a law superior to all human authority; it proclaimed that great truth which forms the only foundation of our hope for humanity; namely, that there exists a law above all human law, which, by whatever name it may be called, whether reason, the law

of God, or what not, is, in all times and in all places, the same law under different names."

In the fifth century, the church began an undertaking of great importance to society — the separation of temporal and spiritual authority. "This separation," continues the same historian, "is the only true source of liberty of conscience; it was based upon no other principle than that which serves as the groundwork for the strictest and most extensive liberty of conscience. The separation of temporal and spiritual powers rests solely upon the idea that physical and brute force has no right or authority over the mind, over convictions, over truth. It flows from the distinction established between the world of thought and the world of action, between our inward and intellectual nature and the outward world around us. So that, however paradoxical it may seem, that very principle of liberty of conscience for which Europe has so long struggled, so much suffered, which has only so lately prevailed, and that, in many instances, against the will of the clergy, — that very principle was acted upon under the name of a separation of the temporal and spiritual power, in the infancy of European civilization. It was, moreover, the Christian church itself, driven to assert it by the circumstances in which it was placed, as a means of defence against barbarism, that introduced and maintained it.

"The establishment, then, of a moral influence, the maintenance of this divine law, and the separation of temporal and spiritual power, may be enumerated as the great benefits which the Christian church extended to European society in the fifth century.

"Unfortunately all its influences, even at this period, were not equally beneficial. Already, even before the close of the fifth century, we discover some of those vicious principles which have had so baneful an effect on the advancement of our civilization. There already prevailed in the bosom of the church a desire to separate the governing and the governed.



The attempt was thus early made to render the government entirely independent of the people under its authority — to take possession of their mind and life, without the conviction of their reason or the consent of their will. The church, moreover, endeavored, with all her might, to establish the principle of theocracy, to usurp temporal authority, to obtain universal dominion. And when she failed in this, when she found she could not obtain absolute power for herself, she did what was almost as bad: to obtain a share of it, she leagued herself with temporal rulers, and enforced, with all her might, their claim to absolute power at the expense of the liberty of the subject.”

From the beginning of the sixth century, as the alliance between church and state grew much more intimate, the progress of deterioration rapidly and wretchedly advanced down to the fifteenth century, when, on the occasion of the martyrdom of Huss by the council of Constance, the emperor Sigismund seated himself by the side of the infamous pope Balthasar Cossa, his soul tormented with remorse, and his hands stained with blood. In the words of Pollok, —

“Then was the evil day of tyranny,  
 Of kingly and of priestly tyranny,  
 That bruised the nations long. As yet, no state  
 Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom’s wine,  
 Though loud of freedom was the talk of all.  
 Some groaned more deeply, being heavier tasked;  
 Some wrought with straw, and some without; but all  
 Were slaves, or meant to be; for rulers still  
 Had been of equal mind — excepting few —  
 Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile,  
 And had with equal shoulder propped the Beast.  
 As yet, the Church, the holy spouse of God,  
 In members few, had wandered in her weeds  
 Of mourning, persecuted, scorned, reproached,  
 And buffeted, and killed — in members few,  
 Though seeming many whiles; then fewest oft  
 When seeming most. She still had hung her harp  
 Upon the willow-tree, and sighed and wept  
 From age to age.”

But this evil is not confined to what we are accustomed to term "the dark ages." All history and observation attest the danger, the fearful curse, connected with the insurmountable vice of absolute power, wheresoever it may exist, whatsoever name it may bear, and for whatever object it may be exercised. The religious influence of an unlimited monarch is often as dangerous as the rankest impiety. In the middle of the nineteenth century, it is easy to perceive from the proclamations issued by Nicholas, that he considers God as the guardian of legitimate kings, and the special patron of Russia's autocrat. Aided by a sycophantic hierarchy, he has contrived to throw an air of sanctity over his infamous usurpations; with pious pretensions extirpates a noble race, and, in the name of a merciful God, drenches their country in blood.

There is something supremely frightful in the idea of one man fastening chains on a whole people, and crushing millions beneath his iron heel; of tyrannical dictation to those millions in matters of eternal moment, so that the entire country they have received from God is overshadowed and desolated by the despotism of a frail fellow-being. In view of the invasion of Greece by Darius, Diogenes is represented as having said, "An Athenian is more degraded by becoming the counsellor of a king, than a king is degraded by becoming the school-master of paupers in a free city. Such people as Dionysius are to be approached by the brave and honest from two motives only — to convince them of their inutility, and to slay them for their iniquity. Our fathers and ourselves have witnessed in more than one country the curses of kingly power. All nations, all cities, all communities, should enter into one great hunt, like those of the Scythians at the approach of winter, and should follow it up unrelentingly to its perdition. The diadem should designate the victim. All who wear it, all who offer it, and all who bow to it, should perish. The smallest, the poorest, the least accessible villages, whose cottages are indistinguishable from the rocks around, should offer a reward for the heads of these monsters, as for the wolf's, the kite's, and the viper's."

But regal power is a more pernicious impediment to religious progress than it was to ancient freedom ; and the Christian has occasion to deprecate its influence as earnestly as did Athena's sage. What can possibly justify the transformation of immortal men into the mere echo and image of one unbridled tyrant, who is bowed to as a God ? The soul has become a wretched thing indeed, when it is compelled implicitly to obey a foreign will as a despotism with which it is foolish to struggle, and which it is vain to resist. All such obedience is mechanical, grudging, constrained. It wants the elasticity of faith and the spontaneousness of love. All persons would immediately rebel against this iron yoke, only that they sometimes have been so long serfs that they have lost the courage to rebel. If they partially escape from their thralldom, they are quite likely soon again to bow with a still more crouching and cowardly prostration to the tyranny that has already fettered them. Thus, in harmony with the example of Luther, and the example of Calvin, Voltaire preached at the same time revolt against spiritual authorities, and submission to temporal power. The reformation was far from being complete, because its leaders continued to be the helots of the state. They violently denounced the true reformers, who, applying the same principles to political oppression as to religious, sought to emancipate the nations from this craven slavery, and bring all mankind into the free, the joyous and energetic service of their Father, God. We shall hereafter have occasion to discuss this point at large.

If the reformation was imperfect in Germany, it was vastly worse in England. "The best and most perfect church in the world," it should ever be remembered, was founded by that meek and immaculate "Defender of the Faith," Henry VIII. This title was conferred upon him by the pope for writing a pamphlet against Luther, and was a reward to the Protestant crown for its first blow against the infant Protestant cause. Through a career of frightful licentiousness and blood, the king pursued his course in establishing the English church in igno-

rance and bigotry. While Luther was translating the Bible into his native tongue, and diffusing it all over Germany, Henry, this first "head of the church," was intriguing to get Tyndal, the early English translator, persecuted to death in Holland, and was issuing his royal pious proclamations that the Bible should not be read by the working men, or any woman whatever, except by the special permission of the priest. In Germany, notwithstanding the leaders feared to go the whole length for freedom, the popular feeling spread itself rapidly; but in England, aristocratical cupidity, state patronage, and priestly influence, connected themselves with every department of what was called the reformed religion of the country, and, from that day to this, either shut out all education from the masses of the people, or made it the mere tool of ecclesiastical power.

If any religious institution in the world deserves to be called a creature of the state, it is the Protestant church of England. It was shaped originally very much after a wretched king's own will, and has been the dupe and tool of bigoted kingcraft ever since. It is surprising that a people generally so sturdy and sound-hearted could tamely submit to dictation, in matters of religion, under such creatures as Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. The most melancholy feature of all is, that religious functionaries of every order, from the lowest to the highest, continue with impunity to advocate "the divine right of kings to govern wrong." It is not long since that a lordly bishop, in a sermon before the House of Lords, declared that "the divine right of the first magistrate, in every polity, to the citizen's obedience, is not of that sort which it were high treason to claim for the sovereign of this country. It is a right which in no country can be denied, without the highest of all treasons. The denial of it were treason against the paramount authority of God." This ridiculous, if not impious, claim set up by one of the lordships of the realm, in favor of the absolute authority of the sovereign, masculine or feminine, adult or babeling, is urged by a promi-

ment religious satellite near the regal sphere, and is a striking instance and illustration of the pernicious alliance between church and king. Fearful, indeed, is that consolidation of selfishness and tyranny,

“That sets the emaciate wolf to dog the flock,  
The hawk to guard the dove-cote!”

In the second place, let us look more minutely into the nature of the relationship which royal ambition is so prompt to form between the church and state.

In former discussions, we have shown that the sole object of Jesus was to instruct the world in true religion, and labor for the moral improvement of all mankind. He never appeared with the arrogance and importunity of a boisterous demagogue, but always in the peaceful character of a teacher from heaven, who had the instruction and salvation of his fellow-citizens supremely at heart. He even pronounced those the best fitted for the kingdom of God, who possess a feeling of universal benevolence, and an anxious desire for perfection in moral excellence; and as the rich and exalted in station are too often fatally deficient in this respect, he declares it next to impossible for them to enter the heavenly kingdom. As was the Redeemer, so was the church he founded, in idea and character, directly opposite to that of a state, and especially antagonistic to every thing like royalty. A state does not regard individuals, but classes; and its regard for favorite classes is measured, not by intrinsic merit, but by accidental circumstances, as wealth, birth, station, &c. But a church, so far as it is Christian, acts on directly the opposite principle; disregarding all adventitious externals, it regards men as individual persons, allowing no gradation of ranks, but such as grace and practical goodness have conferred. For this reason, therefore, as Coleridge has well said, “A church is, in idea, the only pure democracy.” Christianity, developed and exercised as its Author designed, is a power self-subsisting, in its own proper vitality independent, and designed to counterbalance, by its influence, all the

exorbitant influences which tend to subjugate and oppress the nations. To exercise civil power in her name, to subordinate religious institutions as tools of state, is as impious as absurd; and it is among the chief dishonors of Protestantism to have recognized crowned and coroneted sinners as the supreme head and legislators of Christianity, in every earthly kingdom claiming to be Protestant.

Christ never forced the truth upon any one. He could speak, indeed, with an eloquence which melted every heart, and affected even his foes; but he never dazzled that he might make superficial converts, nor did he ever cunningly confound his hearers that he might more successfully entangle them in the meshes of a creed. He always respected reason in man, and addressed himself frankly and magnanimously to man's free will, teaching every where that when we neglect those faculties given us by nature for perceiving the truth, we judge falsely of true religion, and involve ourselves in disgraceful inconsistencies. For examples, consult Matt. xii. 9—12; Luke xiv. 1—6; Matt. xxiii. 16—33, &c. In reading the whole history of Christ's life and instructions, we cannot fail to be struck with astonishment and delight at the carefulness with which he ever honored the freedom and capacities of the human mind, in all cases seeking to create rational convictions, and never employing coercion aside from the constraints of love. He did not consider it of so much importance for men to believe, as for them to believe aright, with reason and reflection; and he was not so anxious for the accession of numbers to his kingdom, as for the establishment of that kingdom on the basis of exalted freedom and the most perfect brotherhood. Christ gave the church authority, but not force,—the authority vested in their own equal, voluntary suffrages, and never allowed to go forth in individual domination over the mass. No law in religion, no duty, can result from force, which differs essentially and eternally from authority. Force is the power that compels, authority the law that equitably directs. From the right to command results the duty to obey; from the power to

compel follows the necessity to yield. The two ideas are heaven-wide. To confound them would be to discard the significant sense of common language, allowing us to say of the tempest uprooting an oak, that it exercises a right, and that the oak in falling fulfils a duty.

In planting the church on earth, Christ established a government infinitely superior to all others, and of which he is the only head. All religious allegiance is due only to him. All Christians, by the very process of becoming such, are most solemnly pledged to serve the Savior, and him alone. For kings and their perjured satellites to usurp ecclesiastical control, is to obtrude into the holy place an impertinence not more splendid than profane. This fact was strongly felt by the early church. Said Tertullian, "I consent to recognize Cæsar, provided he will exact of me nothing that conflicts with the laws of Him from whom the highest authority descends. Besides, I am free; I have no other master than God the omnipotent, eternal, who is also the master of Cæsar." But a sadder day of personal and national imbecility has come, when over the greater portion of earth, religion is made an institution of the state, completely subordinate to the sovereign in both doctrine and form. As might be expected, infidelity and hypocrisy of the darkest dye follow in the train; for when men refuse to believe Christianity on the authority of God, they will be sure not to believe in God on the authority of the king.

It does not appear in the Bible and providence, that infinite wisdom has suspended the dominion of Christ upon the fiat of Cæsar; nor do we think that those teachers are most worthy of being heard, who maintain that this dogma lies at the basis of every thing purely orthodox. Christianity never once recognizes her dependence upon law. We search the sacred record in vain for a single hint intimating that it would ever rely for triumph upon aid extraneous to itself. Its power is all within itself, and its ultimate universal success is suspended, not upon the machinery that may be gathered around it, but upon the divine energy which is evolved by and from it, using no

means that are not both peaceful and original with itself, while it anticipates no successes that are not grounded upon its own transcendent excellence. Such is the Christianity of Christ, but quite another thing is the religion of state. That bids every man throw his individual conscience into one public caldron, "that, by the potency of some invisible fire, they may all be melted down into a state conscience, which state conscience is, in respect of making provision for the spiritual wants of man, to do duty for every member of the community, and become a universal proxy."

Tyrants have ever oppressed human thought by hindering its free development; they would control, as far as possible, the ethereal power which tends constantly to escape from the bonds it is too often forced to endure. Genius and free thought are always on the side of popular improvement and national progress. Freedom is essential to produce the best mental creations, which masterpieces forever generate and fortify republicanism. The whole circle of the arts and sciences join in choral song to mankind, like Christianity herself proclaiming nature's decree, "All ye are brethren." They acknowledge no despotism, nor unchanging dynasty. Their life is derived from unimpeded advancement, and therefore do they scorn all lordship, whether solitary or consolidated. Science, like the air, is Heaven's gift for all, and works more naturally for the millions than for the few. Literature, like an immortal blessing, lives on from age to age and from land to land, always the most widely beneficent when permitted to be most free. At the period of the reformation, the wise and independent heroes of old awoke as it were from the grave, and came forth to teach the world. With the revival of intellect and letters, there was the resurrection of that spirit of ennobling power which is always the pioneer and patron of intellectual and civil liberty. In England, when the parasites of spiritual oppression foresaw the coming storm which was about to burst upon the Stuarts, they translated and published ancient classics, to avert, if possible, the outbreak which so



speedily followed. But the result was the contrary of what was expected; for the thoughts of free men acted as a stimulus, rather than a quietus, to the people. There were many who, like Algernon Sidney, were

“By ancient learning to th’ enlightened love  
Of ancient freedom warmed.”

Whatever inspires in the masses of the people a disposition to think for themselves, and to act fearlessly according to the dictates of God’s word only and their own convictions of right, is inimical to the relation of church and king, and for this reason is most furiously opposed. When John Huss came before the council at Constance to give a reason for the faith dearer to him than life, he was hooted down by kingcraft and priestcraft, so that not a word of his defence was heard by the popular ear. The only provocative to this royal uproar was the fact, that he and his co-martyr, Wickliffe, proclaimed the sovereignty of the people in matters pertaining to their highest rights. Said Huss, “The people can, if they wish, correct their masters when they fall into error.” Hearing this, the emperor Sigismond, springing to his feet, furiously exclaimed, “Not content in having degraded the priesthood, dare you wish to degrade kings?” For this offence his books were burned with his body, and his ashes were thrown into the River Rhine. The spirit of the craft is ever the same. Charles V. sent a herald through the chief city of his realm, proclaiming with a trumpet, that no minister would be suffered to preach any more without special permission from the emperor. “Thus,” as the elector of Saxony wrote to Luther, “our Lord God is commanded to be silent at the Imperial Diet at Augsburg.” We hear much of the horrors of the French revolution; but in this, as in other things, we are in danger of exaggerating the effect, without sufficiently noting the guiltier cause. The priesthood who revoked the edict of Nantz, and drove from their country the skill, industry, virtue, and piety which were the sinews of her strength; the sycophants who

intoxicated Louis XIV. with the ambition of universal empire; the profligate and shameless Orleans; and the still more brutalized Louis XV., with his retinue of ecclesiastical panders and prostitutes, were the infamous cause of national revulsions whose end is not yet. Says the amiable Channing, "The revolution was, indeed, a scene of horror; but when I look back on the reigns which preceded it, and which made Paris almost one great stew and gaming-house, and where I see altar and throne desecrated by a licentiousness unsurpassed in any former age, I look on scenes as shocking to the calm and searching eye of reason and virtue as the tenth of August and the massacres of September. Bloodshed is, indeed, a terrible spectacle; but there are other things almost as fearful as blood. There are crimes that do not make us start and turn pale like the guillotine, but are deadlier in their workings. God forbid that I should say a word to weaken the thrill of horror with which we contemplate the outrages of the French revolution! But when I hear that revolution quoted to frighten us from reform, to show us the danger of lifting up the depressed and ignorant mass, I must ask whence it came; and the answer is, that it came from the intolerable weight of misgovernment and tyranny, from the utter want of culture among the mass of the people, and from a corruption of the great too deep to be purged away except by destruction. I am also compelled to remember that the people, in this their singular madness, wrought far less woe than kings and priests have wrought, as a familiar thing, in all ages of the world. All the murders of the French revolution did not amount, I think, by one fifth, to those of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's. The priesthood and the throne, in one short night and day, shed more blood,—and that the best blood of France,—than was spilled by Jacobinism and all other forms of violence during the whole revolution. Even the atheism and infidelity of France were due chiefly to a licentious priesthood and a licentious court. It was Religion, so called, that dug her own grave."

When the church and state are united by law, the result is always intolerance and tyranny. It matters not whether the alliance is with Romanism, with Unitarianism, with Calvinism, or with democratic infidelity, as has been proved in the old papal dominions, at Geneva, in Canton de Vaud, in Protestant England, and Presbyterian Scotland. The virus is every where the same, and, when once infused into the body politic, the identical plague is soon certain to rage. The chief ones in authority seem to suppose that the poor creature whom they judge to be a heretic is God's personal foe, and that their hatred of a fellow-man is shared by the merciful Father of all mankind. The only alternative before such Christian kings is to drive their victim into the church which they control, or out of the world into that hell of which their elder brother is the sovereign; and they are usually surrounded and sustained by ecclesiastical props, to whom such service is a genial task.

Consider the means by which the alliance between church and state is maintained. They are two — legislation and the hierarchy; and, for examples of both, we will turn to England. We will not stop in the House of Commons, whom a recent writer of their own describes as “an aggregate body of gentlemen called honorable, the sons of peers or near relations, lawyers and stockbrokers, country gentlemen and bankers, fortunate speculators and [*rare aves*] successful gamblers, rich manufacturers, Indian nabobs, soldiers, and seamen, with here and there a philosopher. All the varieties of creed may find their abettors in this assembly, and every commandment of Heaven, saving that which says, ‘Thou shalt not steal,’ its violators, without disqualifying them for the exercise of legislative authority. They are chosen without the smallest reference to religion, gathered from all classes but the poor, brought together from all quarters, and selected of every shade of character, from the *roué* to the devotee, and, being associated together in one body, they forthwith undertake to construct and work an apparatus of means, having, for its object, to persuade all the subjects of the realm to revere, love, obey, and confide in

God." We should give especial attention to the peers, the chief source of church government and patronage. Every reader of history knows that when the Norman conqueror had succeeded, by fire and murder, in robbing the original occupants of that land of their possessions, he gave to his ruthless accomplices the estates which he had seized, and conferred on them most of the privileges of nobility. From time to time the number of these worthies was enlarged by the elevation of other successful warriors. Some civilians have been added, and the eldest of their male descendants wear the title, and assume the functions, of their ancestors. These are the august personages who, by the accident of birth, become the hereditary legislators for the church of Christ, with power to dictate religion to the people, and make them pay for it. They may be good or bad, wise or foolish, it matters not. What they themselves believe, or what they do, is equally a matter of indifference; the grand fact is, they are born lords, and, conjointly with their idol, the monarch, lord it unquestioned over all the consciences and souls of the realm. Prominent in that House of Peers is the "bench of bishops," mingling with these great proficientes and supporters of the sword-power, and receiving their marked approbation. Together they exhort the people to "stand by the altar and the throne;" and, when a bloody war is resolved upon, and executed in support of the unholy prerogatives of the mitre and crown, one of their number writes, and, by united action, they command, throughout the kingdom, to be read, a special tribute of thanksgiving, that they, the hereditary legislators of the church, and their gallant allies, have succeeded in blowing out so many brains. The most fruitful source of bloodshed for centuries has been the alliance between church and king, that most pernicious relic of feudalism, the complete eradication of which will, we fear, occasion yet more terrific wars. Certain it is that nothing can be more unjust and absurd than the legal support we have described. "The philosophy of a people," says Bonold, "is its legislation. When men, greedy of domination,

impose their own opinions upon a people for laws, and endeavor to make their particular sentiments a general doctrine, foolish and impious legislations are the consequence."

Another and even more pernicious resource upon which tyranny mainly relies, is perverted education. Kingly governments are becoming rapidly modified. Some of them are essentially republican in their politics, as in England, where freedom of thought and speech is comparatively unfettered. But in religious matters another spirit prevails. Precisely where there should be least restraint, there is the most of it. Touching one's spiritual creed, liberty means just what the royal vocabulary pleases to make it mean. The most thorough mental slavery sways every rank, from the palace down to the hovel. No British regality is allowed the right of conversion to other theological notions than those sworn to in the Thirty-nine Articles, whatever the individual possessing that royalty may think of them. For a king or queen publicly to avow a change of religious belief, is to forfeit the exalted station they occupy. What vassalage is meaner than this? The peers seem to be as loyal as the Cavaliers who followed the standard of Charles I., and who declared they would fight to death for the crown, though it were only stuck upon a thorn-bush. This reverence for royalty affected strongly even the mind of such a man as Lord Bacon. How so? They who grow up under the enchantments of amalgamated CUNNING and STRENGTH are very likely to become a fatally-fascinated prey. To them the crown is the great mystery of antiquity, the symbol of all mortal divinity, the blazing star of all glory and conquest. It is regarded as the arcanum of power, virtue, and righteousness, the ark of the royal covenant, — that which descended from heaven to earth, to subsist expressly between God and kings. Hence the grovelling adoration, on the part of aristocracies, towards royal prerogatives, the second downward degree of mental slavery. Below these we meet a long gradation of ranks and classes composing the gentry and common people. How are these moulded into shape, and held in abeyance to

the purposes of the alliance we are discussing? That is performed expressly and almost entirely by the church, which receives and distributes, not pelf only, but power; that state-church which is not simply a monopoly in itself, but the shield and patron of all other monopolies. Let Miall describe the process in his own vivid and forcible manner.

“Fifteen thousand clergy, trained in the most exclusive spirit at universities where subserviency to rank is not only taught, but practised; receiving each his appointment to a living from the hands of a land-owning patron, or, what is much to the same purpose, from those of a bishop or the crown; looking to the same source for future preferment; dependent, for intercourse with aristocratic society, upon the good will of the neighboring squire; sympathizing with all the sectional feelings of the order, as being themselves members of a privileged class; wielding, to appearance, the dreadful sanctions of religion; almoners, usually, of parochial funds and the great man's bounty; conduits through which may flow to bowing tradesmen the custom of the rich; having access to every house, able to assume an air of authority, and, in virtue of their office, to work upon religious fears and affections; fifteen thousand clergy thus dependent on the one hand, and powerful on the other; to the aristocracy pledged servants, to their own flocks supreme dictators; stationed at convenient intervals over the length and breadth of the land, and thus coming in contact with society at all points,—could mechanism more fatal to religion, or more serviceable to the interests of the upper class, be framed and put together?

“All the movements of this tremendous engine are under the complete control of the class for whose advantage it exists. The appointment of bishops, to whom is intrusted the superintendence of this well-organized corps, who dispense no small portion of its patronage, and whose requests, in consequence, have all the force of law, is vested in the crown, that is, in the ministry for the time being. That they are selected for their spiritual aptitude for the office, none will pretend. Their ele-

vation is in most instances owing to their connection with, or their former subserviency to, the aristocracy. They thereupon become members of "the order." They breathe exclusive atmosphere. They are thoroughly imbued with the aristocratic spirit. Is any inroad upon sectional privileges threatened, they have but to nod the head, to give the well-understood sign, and, on the instant, tenants, tradesmen, parish officers, paupers, small gentlemen who occasionally dine at the squire's, matrons who tremble for religion, and young ladies who are looking up to respectable connections, send forth a cry of disapprobation, and send up a shoal of petitions, at which the boldest statesman may be excused for standing appalled.

"The intimate dependency of the one class upon the other is sufficiently illustrated by daily facts. If any instance can be pointed out in which the clergy and the aristocracy have taken different sides, we would be content to give up the whole argument. But, in truth, it cannot be. The hands must obey the mandates of the head."

It is the policy of every hierarchical establishment to obtain exclusive control over every university, as was seen until recently all over the continent, and is still the fact in the British islands. The church claims the supreme prerogative to be the only source of education; and, as the moulder of the popular character, it is most ambitious to prepare its dupes for the use of the state. If the king needs subjects who will implicitly obey his mandates; soldiers who will not question the righteous necessity of pouring out their blood to support the immunities of splendid indolence, and ministers who will stoop to any truculent subserviency to "the altar and the throne," the church stands ready to furnish an abundant supply. Her principle of unlimited obedience, inculcated from earliest infancy on all the youth of the land, has done the work of succumbing preparation, and she goes with her vassal hordes to the state, saying, "Here are so many hundreds, thousands, or millions of tools, ready to obey any command, and to perform any task; they will be perfectly subservient to all your wants and wishes, so

long as you do not interfere with us; hand us over the tithes in payment."

It could not be expected that a community thus trained would be very magnanimous on the score of the rights of conscience, or very zealous in the defence of general liberty. Take an illustration. On the 14th of July, 1791, a few persons at Birmingham met to commemorate the destruction of the Bastile. Among these was that distinguished philosopher whom Robert Hall eulogized for his personal worth, and defended when deprived of his religious rights—Dr. Priestley. Soon after the meeting broke up, a ruffian mob was raised and led on by "most respectable men." The windows of the hotel at which the party had met were speedily demolished. A cry was raised to burn Dr. Priestley's chapel, and also his house. The residences of many of his friends shared the same fate. The sky was illuminated for miles round by the blaze they kindled that night. History accredits all this loyal work to clergymen and high civil functionaries; for such persons connected with the magistracy were seen and heard in the outrageous rabble while all this was going on. Driven from Birmingham to London, no sooner had Dr. Priestley arrived in Hackney, where he intended to reside, than a very pious church-and-state placard was in every public place posted up, couched as follows:—

"Dr. Priestley is a damned rascal, an enemy to the political and religious constitution of this country, a fellow of a treasonable mind, consequently a bad Christian; for it is not only our duty, but the glorious ambition, of every good Christian to fear God and honor the king."

We have presented enough to show the horrid nature of the relationship that ever subsists between allied political and religious power. Its whole history is one loathsome picture of clerical selfishness, ambition, intolerance, and hypocrisy. No deeds of darkness have been too foul, no attacks upon the rights of man have been too malignant and infernal, to be perpetrated by ecclesiastics in the name of state Christianity.



When were they ever seen struggling with the people for civil freedom and mental independence? Never! Despotism and tyranny have ever found in them the willing and zealous tools to enslave the masses of mankind. Doubtless there are good men among them who regret the condition of things in which they are placed; but the talents and sacred calling of the great majority are notoriously prostituted at the beck of infamous courts, in preaching up the divine right of kings, and in enforcing the duties of passive obedience and non-resistance to the most oppressive wrongs. What they ever have been they are to-day, modified only in some slight respects by the progressive spirit of the age.

Having taken a brief historical view of the alliance between church and king, and having portrayed the nature of that relationship, let us, in the third place, look at some of its results.

“My kingdom,” said Christ, “is not of this world.” He came, indeed, to rule mankind, but not to rule them after an earthly mode, not by force and menace, not by arbitrary dictation, but by setting before them a heavenly example, and by inculcating those divine precepts which educate, ennoble, and save the soul. He came to exert a moral power, and not martial or legal; to reign by the exemplification of exalted virtues; to arouse the energies of the free mind, and invest the spirit and life of his disciples with all the mild splendors of true godliness. He came to publish liberty to the captives; to open the prison door; to deliver from the thralldom of passion; to break the yoke of cumbrous rituals in religion fitted only for the childhood of our race; to transform us into the divine image and exalt all to an equal participation of his own eternal throne. The Redeemer never authorized the slightest alliance of his institutions with civil power, but condemned the passion for such dominion with the greatest abhorrence, as being the most pernicious foe to true religion. He would have Christianity separated from state control, as the “church in the wilderness” was happily isolated from the Egyptian bondage from

which it had just escaped. Christ came to realize the sublime idea of true independence, and through his doctrines to impart it to all mankind; to be himself the heart of the church, and its only Lord. Says Dr. Harris, —

“The voice of prophecy had declared that such would be the spiritual character of his new kingdom. For while some monstrous type, of brute ferocity and power, was deemed an appropriate symbol of each preceding monarchy as seen by Daniel, the ensign of the Messiah’s reign was distinguished by the likeness of the Son of man; aptly denoting, that while *they* prevailed by the ascendancy of physical might, from *his* kingdom should be banished every carnal weapon and instrument of coercion; and that to him should belong the honor of recognizing and erecting the prostrate elements of humanity, of reigning by the spiritual action of mind on mind, the almighty influence of enlightened reason, of sanctified gratitude and love. It was distinctly predicted that his kingdom, instead of symbolizing with any of the governments of earth, should be to the world an image of his own sufficiency, surpassing and encompassing them all. At first, it would resemble an *imperium in imperio*, a dominion of principle and affection flourishing amidst the kingdoms of the world, like the verdure of paradise set in the desert; but in the end, as Bacon describes the prevalence of a far different principle, ‘it bringeth in a new *primum mobile*, that ravisheth all the spheres of government;’ forming, from first to last, in the eyes of the world, an anomaly of government. Accordingly, when Jesus came to erect it, he appeared at a loss for suitable illustrations by which to explain it to the minds of his hearers. ‘Whereunto,’ saith he, ‘shall we liken the kingdom of God, and with what comparison shall we compare it?’ None of the governments of the world supplied an analogy: he who is the wisdom of God seemed embarrassed, as he looked around the world of civil society for a similitude, and saw that it contained none.”

Next to his own supreme dominion in every thing pertaining to our highest welfare, Christ fostered and enforced the sov-

ereignty of the people ; that sovereignty which is the essence of liberty itself, founded on equality, political, civil, and religious, and which respects the rights of all by the especial protection of each. This theory, first realized by the Son of God, is the most beautiful ever presented, because it is the most true ; and is the most consoling, because it leaves no grief unmitigated, and no injury unavenged. But its retribution is that of justice and mercy only ; hence it is the most sublime, as well as the most holy, because it is the expression of universal suffrages here below, harmonious with the infinite will on high. If there be aught in Christianity which elevates it above the pestiferous region of mere fable, any thing lovely and true, any thing divine, of this fact we may be sure, that whatever principle it contains is worthy of being trusted to the uttermost, and foremost among its principles stand the rights of an unfettered conscience granted to every rational being on earth. To infringe on these, is to inflict the greatest injury man can possibly endure. In church relationship, Christ is God with us, and we with God ; and no finite being has any authority to interpose himself in the slightest degree. The universe has no grant of nobility, and no dignity higher than that of being inscribed in the Lamb's book of life ; and this the lowliest Christian enjoys equally with the highest. As early as 1532, the church at Berne declared that the state ought not to interfere with religious matters, except in respect to external order. "But as to the work of grace, it is not in the power of man, and is dependent on no magistrate. The state should not meddle with the conscience ; Jesus Christ our Lord is our only Master. If the magistrate meddles with the gospel, he will only make hypocrites." Switzerland has ever maintained a noble primitive spirit in this respect. "Let the moderator have the presidency," say the ordinances of Schaffhausen, "but nothing more, lest a *monarchy* should take the place of *democracy*."

The legitimate results of the system we deprecate are indicated by the present condition of the eastern hemisphere com-

pared with that of the west. Look at the old and imbecile empires where immemorial kingcraft and priestcraft were born. Their annals are full of convulsions, but not movements. Genius, under their sway, is too often struck with a torpidity which unfits it to perfect even the mediocrity it has invented. The popular mind is palsied by the sceptre it obeys, and moves sluggishly in a circle which perpetually returns to the same starting-point. This result is produced by the combination of all those institutions which fetter, embarrass, and retard human progress; systems of state religion, worship of ancestors, and division of the people into castes. On the contrary, look at the west: what activity, what ardor, what a thirst for improvement and advancement, what an impetuosity of life! Citizens here find a spur in the present which urges them onward to something broader and nobler yet to come; they see that they have a hopeful and glorious future to conquer; their lot is not immutably fixed; they feel that they are free incessantly to modify and improve it. The principal cause that has created and perpetuated this distinguished state of things was religion, an influence which grew more and more free and expansive as it perpetually advanced. It outgrew Abraham and tradition; it outgrew the heroic and federal times in Israel when Moses and Joshua flourished; it outgrew the powers of monarchy exercised by David and Solomon, in endeavors to maintain spiritual unity by political consolidation; finally, it outgrew the prophets, in their struggle against idolatry, by giving the pre-eminence to the moral element of worship above the ceremonial, that clearest unfolding of the spirit of true religion which heralded the Messiah, and gave the gospel of redemption to mankind. That religion is still advancing, having been made perfect and divine in "the man Christ Jesus," and is destined to mature Christian manhood every where. It scorns to use the rod that hung up over the mantel-piece to frighten the infancy of our race. Human character, and the religion given to redeem it, have passed this stage of childishness, and, released from nursery trammels, man is coming to pursue the

great ends of existence, loving all and fearing none, guided only by the light of heaven in his own consciousness, and feeling that there can be no sin without its punishment, no virtue without it appropriate reward. Kings and their gew-gaws in the church are regarded as a nuisance by all the good, and must soon become every where obsolete. Their only hope of being tolerated at all in this age lies in their speedy divorce-ment from ecclesiastical affairs. The great masses of the people will submit to the alliance no longer. It is an unmitigated curse to all concerned, as Milton saw the results it produced in his day, and described in the following magnificent passage:—

“I cannot better liken the state and person of a king than to that mighty Nazarite, Samson, who, being disciplined in the practice of temperance and sobriety, and without the strong drink of excessive and injurious desires, grows up to a noble strength and perfection, with those his illustrious and sunny locks, the laws, waving and curling about his godlike shoulders. And while he keeps them about him undiminished and unshorn, he may, with the jaw-bone of an ass, that is, with the word of his meanest officer, suppress and put to confusion thousands of those that rise up against his just power. But, laying down his head amongst the strumpet flatteries of prelates, whilst he sleeps and thinks no harm, they wickedly shaving off all those bright and weighty tresses of his laws and just prerogatives which were his ornament and strength, deliver him over to indirect and violent counsels, which, as those Philistines, put out the clear and far-sighted eyes of his natural discerning, and make him grind in the prison-house of their sinister ends and practices upon him; till he, knowing this prelatical razor to have bereft him of his wonted might, nourish again his puissant hair, the golden beams of law and right, and sternly shook thunder with ruin upon the heads of those his evil counsellors, but not without great affliction to himself.”

The cry of the popular conscience grows more distinct and universal every day against allowing monarchs any longer to

subordinate Christianity to their own degraded designs. The nations desire no more to see her enslaved in the ante-rooms of despots, prostituted in service the most base. The grand cry of rousing humanity is for the rescue of religion from all control of the state. Henceforth aspiring to be independent, and not fearing royal or hierarchical interference, the church will say to her teachers every where, as did one of old, (Amos vii. 12, 13,) "Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Beth-el, for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court."

This growing discontent under the united tyranny of church and state results from the rapidly-increased consciousness of its fearful effects in every clime. In Russia and Greece, it successfully resists all attempts to reform the idolatrous worship of the Greek church. In Italy and Austria, fortified by the state, Romanism maintains itself, tremblingly, it is true, but not yet overthrown. For centuries the cimeter has defended the Koran; while the bayonets of Germany and England have hitherto sustained the hollow formalism of a defunct Protestant establishment.

It is on the latter domain that the greatest evils of church and state relationship are at present found, and it is doubtless there that the last and greatest battle for religious freedom is to be fought. How does that religion appear in the English church, which disclaims worldly pretensions, warns against "the deceitfulness of riches," and courts not "the honor which cometh from men" — that religion which was cradled in poverty, baptized in suffering, dwelt from choice among the laborious, and has forbidden to its followers all titles of distinction? We will let a distinguished living English author present an instance and illustration.

"Take the last royal christening, and look at it simply as a state imbodiment of Christianity. Without staying to question the rite itself, or the authority upon which it is founded, look at it as a simple act of divine worship. Why, the religion of

the thing is a trifle, compared with its worldly environment. Nothing but costly splendor! Royal sponsors landing amidst salutes of artillery and popular acclamations; cavalcades and processions; jewels and feathers; *fêtes*, banquets, balls, on the most magnificent scale; how can a religious thought or a religious emotion harmonize with the bustle, and the circumstance, and the bravery of a scene like this? We know who retired into a desert to pray. But religion now-a-days can plunge into the very whirl of fashion, and perform its most solemn acts amid the parade of all the accompaniments of frivolous greatness.

“Alas! that that meek, sober, earnest, spiritual reality, Christian truth, Heaven’s best and noblest gift to man, should thus be tricked out with meretricious ornaments, and sent flaring through these realms, so berouged and beribboned by aristocratic frivolity, as to leave upon men’s minds an impression of nothing whatever beyond earthly pomp! They see the coaches and the gold, but where is the moral loveliness to which they are bidden to do homage? They hear the thundering cannon and the swelling organ, but do they, can they, discern, amidst it all, the words of persuasion which drop as the dew? Is, then, that coarse thing which barbarians can equal, if not outvie, Christianity? Are her claims and her instructions thus fitly symbolized? Does she delight in gairish attire, and love to show herself first among the foremost in surrounding herself with a vain show? No! But this is what legislators make of God’s truth. Their wisdom turns a strangely solemn reality into a plaything for nobles; a fresh occasion for the indulgence of their costly tastes; a mere peg upon which to hang aristocratic pomp and pleasure. Ay, they have turned their hands to religion, and a fine thing they have made of it. Strip this state-church of its titles, power, and wealth, and what would be left? What is it but a bubble, reflecting the colors by which it is surrounded? Burst it, and there remains — nothing.”

And burst it will, that bubble, very soon. The people are

coming to understand, and estimate at its proper worth, the value of that government which, a few years since, in minute detail, prescribed to its agents in Canada odious measures of persecution against the Catholics, and at the same time, by a formal treaty, guarantied to the inhabitants of Ceylon the liberty of idolatrous rites, sanctioning, by the presence of ambassadors, those pagan ceremonies, and offering to their divinities sacrilegious gifts. Light is spreading on this subject, and the great body of the nation are looking with rapidly-increased disfavor upon this unholy and insufferable alliance, in which gold, state honors, and ecclesiastical dignities become the spoils of intrigue, the recompense of indolence, and the base pension which functionaries of every grade receive, for crippling the capacities and betraying the rights of the people at large.

But, thank God! Christianity is diffusing the leaven of its influence widely and deeply through the popular heart, rendering its subject both socially regenerative and politically energetic. From age to age it has bequeathed to earth a mighty accumulation of power, which, in the era upon which we are entering, seems destined to burst into freedom, gladness, and salvation in the presence of all mankind. Revolutions the most radical and retributive are growing rife, in view of which let tyrants and bigots take heed, for chasms dark and frightful as their own deeds are yawning wide to give a quick passage down the fiery depths of the oppressor's hell. Combinations to support allied aristocracies around the altar and throne, must bow before the gathering storm of reformation in church and state, or be swept before it like summer dust. "Through this house or over it," said Lord Brougham, on the occasion of a noted debate in the English senate, "this reform bill must pass." The Lord of lords and Monarch of monarchs has decreed that through every chapter house, every ministerial cabinet, and every legislative hall, or over them with crushing might, the great Reform Bill of primitive Christianity shall pass, leaving every where in its course *the mind without a fetter, and the church without a king.*



## CHAPTER II.

### THE CHURCH WITHOUT A POPE.

POPERY originated in degeneracy, flourished most in the darkest times, and is destined to disappear before increasing light. These are the main positions which in this discussion we shall endeavor to substantiate.

In the first place, it was in degeneracy from the primitive purity of the church of Christ, that Papal domination arose. Careful research into this matter will show that the first society of Christian believers was bound together only by the bonds of mutual love, and a free devotion to their common Lord. After his ascension, they continued to coöperate with the same singleness of heart and spontaneous enterprise, for the worship of their heavenly Master and the promotion of his kingdom on earth. The government under which they voluntarily placed themselves was the purest form of freedom ever imbodied and exemplified. "Each individual church possessed the rights and powers inherent in an independent popular assembly. The right to enact their laws, and the entire government of the church, was vested in each individual association of which the church was composed, and was exercised by the members of the same, in connection with their overseers and teachers; and, when the apostles were present, in common also with them."

Next to the inspired historians themselves, perhaps the most reliable writer on this subject is Dr. Augustus Neander. Speaking of the office of the apostles, he says, "They stand as the medium of communication between Christ and the whole Christian church, to transmit his word and his Spirit through all ages. In this respect the church must ever continue to ac-

knowledge her dependence upon them, and to own their rightful authority. Their authority and power can be delegated to none other. But the service which the apostles themselves sought to confer, was to transmit to men the word and the spirit of the Lord, and, by this means, to establish independent Christian communities. These communities, when once established, they refused to hold in a state of slavish dependence upon themselves. Their object was, in the spirit of the Lord, to make the churches free, and independent of their guidance. To the churches their language was, 'Ye beloved, ye are made free; be ye the servants of no man.' The churches were taught to govern themselves. All the members were made to coöperate together as organs of one Spirit, in connection with which spiritual gifts were imparted to each as he might need. Thus they, whose prerogative it was to rule among the brethren, demeaned themselves as the servants of Christ and his church. They acted in the name of Christ and his church, as the organs of that Spirit with which all were inspired, and from which they derived the consciousness of their mutual Christian fellowship. The brethren chose their own officers from among themselves. Or if, in the first organization of the churches, their officers were appointed by the apostles, it was with the approbation of the members of the same."

Possibly as early as the latter part of the life of John, when he was sole survivor of the other apostles, the custom obtained of distinguishing by the name of *episkopos* (bishop) the president of the sacred assembly. There is, however, no evidence that the apostle himself introduced such a change; much less, that he authorized it as a perpetual ordinance for the future. Such an innovation would be directly opposed to the well-known spirit of that apostle. "When, however," continues Neander, "the doctrine is, as it gradually gained currency in the third century, — that the bishops are, by divine right, the head of the church, and invested with the government of the same; that they are the successors of the apostles, and by this succession inherit apostolical authority; that they are the medi-

um through which, in consequence of that ordination which they have received, merely in an outward manner, the Holy Ghost, in all time to come, must be transmitted to the church, — when this becomes the doctrine of the church, we certainly must perceive, in these assumptions, a strong corruption of the purity of the Christian system. It is a carnal perversion of the true idea of the Christian church. It is falling back into the spirit of the Jewish religion. Instead of the Christian idea of a church, based on inward principles of communion, and extending itself by means of these, it presents us with the image of one, like that under the Old Testament, resting in outward ordinances, and, by external rites, seeking to promote the propagation of the kingdom of God. This entire perversion of the original view of the Christian church was itself the origin of the whole system of the Roman Catholic religion, — the germ from which sprung the Popery of the dark ages.”

The control of the apostolical churches was administered by each body of believers collectively, until the third or fourth century. It was about this period that the simple form and efficient discipline of the primitive church, exchanged for a complicated and oppressive system of penance, came to be administered by the clergy, and the usurpations of the Episcopal hierarchy began. Then, instead of being simply an assembly of brethren, with God only for their Word, their Spirit, and their Life, the church became a mere thing of creeds and ceremonies; its head was a man, and if the devotees recognized the presence of Jesus Christ at all, it was mainly in a gross material sense. But he had said from the beginning, with an infinitely higher signification, “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This is the grand doctrine of the Real Presence, which was too early overlooked, but which should never be forgotten by the disciples of our Lord.

The true church is built on the foundation of the purest as well as most sacred liberty, and is cemented with unconstrained confidence and mutual love, the strongest of all bonds. It is a

voluntary assemblage of equals, wherein every one obeys and no one commands. Every rational being is created in a natural independence of every other being; and if the most exalted finite intelligence should come, of his own accord, and with no other credential but his own will, to dictate laws to man, and to subjugate him to his dominion, himself would be a tyrant, and his subjects would be slaves. What shall we say, then, when frail man arrogates sovereignty over man, his equal in rights, and often his superior in reason, in cultivation and virtue? Can there be any pretension more iniquitous or more insolent? Does the universe present a more ignominious servitude? Surely, we may not hesitate to affirm with Rousseau, "A long perversion of just sentiments and ideas is necessary, before one can resolve to take a fellow-man for his master." If this is true with respect to natural society, what shall we say concerning Christian organizations? The duty of obedience implies the right of commanding; and he who has a rightful authority to dictate in religious matters must be above him who submits to his decrees — so much above him that higher than this no superiority can be conceived. An angel, by his nature, is above human beings; and yet man is not bound to yield obedience to an angel in any thing. If Gabriel should assume palpable shape and appear in our midst as a religious ruler, where should we find either reason or revelation directing us to follow his behests? There would be no right on the one hand, or duty on the other.

Plutarch tells us, in his life of Numa, that in the age of Saturn, there will be neither masters nor slaves. In the highest sense, this can be applied only to the peaceful domain and perfect sway of Christianity. Her law is not the expression of a single dictator, nor the avenger of a few wills the most prominent and strong; its object is rather to protect private interests, and to establish righteousness, the supreme interest of all. "Jesus called the disciples unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall

not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This plainly declares that God only has the right to impose on rational creatures religious laws, and that these are imbodyed and exemplified before each independent believer in Jesus Christ. Equity the most severe, blended with benignity the most divine, duty and the reason of duty, the precept sanctioned by the highest example, all are found in Christ alone. He is our great Exemplar, Lawgiver, and Judge, and no other are we bound to obey. " Away, then, with the interference of your Popes and your Right Reverend Fathers in God ; and let the minister of Christ, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, be the bishop of his flock. And away with the nauseous and insufferable arrogance that claims a whole state for a parish, and tells the ministry of every denomination but its own, — men who, ' by pureness, by knowledge, by the word of truth, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned ; ' and, not a few of them, in ' fastings, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, or imprisonments, ' are approving themselves the ministers of God, — that tells such men, ' Your credentials are spurious, and your work unauthorized ; ' and, turning to a whole commonwealth, says to its hundreds of thousands, ' Ye are the people of *my* pasture, and the sheep of my hand. ' "

We have shown that Popery originated in degeneracy ; and we remark, secondly, that it flourished most in times of the least spiritual light and power. We can best prove this point by noting yet more fully the process of degeneracy through which Christianity in her dark days passed.

At the time Christ appeared on earth, the Jews had changed the worship of the only true God into slavish ceremonies as much opposed to genuine religion, and as injurious to morality, as idolatry itself. They proudly conceived themselves to be the chosen people of God, and preferred by him above all others. They not only conceived the very essence of religion to consist of corporeal exercises and sacred ceremonies, but

despised all other nations, and fancied themselves holy, if, notwithstanding the grossest vices, they fasted diligently, offered sacrifice, and zealously observed the foolish superstitions of their fathers. Under such circumstances, it is easy to perceive that the spirit of true religion had vanished from the world Jesus came to redeem, that the pernicious influence of superstition controlled every thing, and that a mighty body of priests, whose existence and authority depended upon this influence, were incessantly engaged in preserving and fortifying it. To provide a remedy for these evils, and to destroy every sort of superstition, by establishing a simple, rational worship of the true God, was an object of Christ's mission. By the diffusion of pure and universal truth, he would extirpate all heathenish rites and exclusive creeds, making the divine word, which had hitherto been the exclusive property of the Jews, to become the faith of the whole human family, the foundation of a nobler and more comprehensive popular belief. When our Lord appeared, religion, in all nations, had constituted an essential part of the civil regulations. All the kingdoms of the old world were theocratical and hierarchical; which state religions, endowed with special prerogatives and armed with high civil power, were, as they ever are, insufferably intolerant. But the religion which Jesus came to spread was directly opposed to this in nature and design, and therefore he kept it carefully distinct from political affairs. He gave the Christian church such regulations as are compatible with any form of national government, but which are to be allied to none. By both example and precept, he inculcated this primary principle in the most clear and emphatic manner. Constraint and power, under no form whatever, were to be employed in matters of religion. The only bond laid upon his disciples by Christ was, allegiance to himself; the only enginery of conquest committed to their hands was the enginery of truth and love.

For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity in the world, there were two distinct societies mutually independent, the one civil, the other religious. This was based on

duty, that on interest ; the first reigned by justice, the second oppressed by force. Christ separated the two as far asunder as possible ; but the pope caused them to coalesce, and made despotism to be the fundamental law of both church and state. The power with which our Lord endowed his people, far from enslaving, elevates and makes more free those upon whom it is exercised, and, in this respect, differs infinitely from the sway for the attainment of which vulgar ambition strives. But he knew, too, that there is another kind of sovereignty, which does not quicken and exalt, but crushes and degrades ; a power which robs men of all the best qualities of their nature, and compels them to bend in base subserviency to the will of a fellow-man. This is the potency which men, even the best, most eagerly grasp ; and, when wielded in ecclesiastical domination, is earth's most fearful curse. Guizot says very truly that "all religion is a restraint, an authority, a government. It comes in the name of a divine law, to subdue, to mortify human nature. It is then to human liberty that it directly opposes itself. It is human liberty that resists it, and that it wishes to overcome. This is the grand object of religion, its mission, its hope.

"But while it is with human liberty that all religions have to contend, while they aspire to reform the will of man, they have no means by which they can act upon him ; they have no moral power over him, but through his own will, his liberty. When they make use of exterior means, — when they resort to force, to seduction, — in short, make use of means opposed to the free consent of man, they treat him as we treat water, wind, or any power entirely physical ; they fail in their object ; they attain not their end ; they do not reach, they cannot govern the will. Before religions can really accomplish their task, it is necessary that they should be accepted by the free will of man ; it is necessary that man should submit, but it must be willingly and freely, and that he still preserves his liberty in the midst of this submission. It is in this that resides the double problem which religions are called upon to resolve.

“They have too often mistaken their object. They have regarded liberty as an obstacle, and not as a means; they have forgotten the nature of the power to which they address themselves, and have conducted themselves toward the human soul as they would toward a material force. It is this error that has led them to range themselves on the side of power, on the side of despotism, against human liberty; regarding it as an adversary, they have endeavored to subjugate rather than to protect it. Had religions but fairly considered their means of operation, — had they not suffered themselves to be drawn away by a natural but deceitful bias, — they would have seen that liberty is a condition without which man cannot be morally governed; that religion neither has nor ought to have any means of influence not strictly moral; they would have respected the will of man in their attempt to govern it. They have too often forgotten this, and the issue has been, that religious power and liberty have suffered together.”

All persons historically informed, and accustomed to extended observation, know that civil and religious freedom are inseparable companions as well as mutual supports, and that in no country can one exist for any great length of time without producing the other. It has been the misfortune of the greater portion of Christendom that state tyrants have assisted a degenerate church in fettering the popular mind, while she, in turn, has powerfully aided them in enslaving the body. This combination of political and ecclesiastical despotism constituted and perpetuated the Popery of the dark ages. Then was declared the infallibility of the pope and his bench of cardinals, thus excluding all dissent. The Bible was suppressed, knowledge in a great measure extinguished, and the human mind shut up to be amused with the most unsubstantial bawbles. The first act of the popes, having arrogated to themselves complete sovereignty in the church of Christ, was that which had been the practice of impious bigotry in all ages — to monopolize the true knowledge among themselves. As the priests of Egypt and Greece enclosed it in mysteries, they wrapped the simple



truths of the gospel in mysteries too ; as the Brahmins forbade any except their own order to read the sacred Vedas, they shut up that holy revelation given to enlighten the world, the very book that declared of its own contents, that they were so clear that " he who ran might read them ;" that they taught the way of life so perspicuously, that " the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not err therein."

Christ imparted no secret doctrines, and would perpetuate his reign on earth through the agency of no occult institutions. The apostles, far from being allowed to consider the private instructions of their divine Master as addressed to them alone, received from him this especial command, which was at the same time a great encouragement : " What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light : and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops." But there is an opposite system, flattering to pride, and convenient for despotism ; a system to which the East is indebted for its castes, and ancient Europe for its superstitions ; which possesses the enormous evil of systematizing and legitimating ignorance. " As man possesses nothing more precious than his thoughts, his conscience, and his religious powers, it follows that intellectual and religious privileges are the worst of all privileges ; they fetter progress in both senses ; among the people, by devoting them to hereditary darkness, and among the initiated, by persuading them that the degree of knowledge conferred by the nature of their institutions is sufficient." This mode of teaching, in which the whole truth is brought to the privileged alone, while what is communicated to the multitude is truth veiled and mutilated, was early adopted by the Papacy, and became one of the most fruitful sources of their power.

The progress of Papal aggression and assumption reached its culminating point in Hildebrand, better known in history as Gregory VII., who made the church wholly dependent on him, and entirely subservient to the papal views. The example of the pontiffs was not lost on the bishops, abbots, and inferior clergy. Says a credible historian, " These, even in the time

of Charlemagne, had actually obtained for their tenants and their possessions an immunity from the jurisdiction of the counts and other magistrates, as also from taxes and imposts of all kinds. But in this century they carried their pretensions still further, aimed at the civil government of the cities and territories in which they exercised a spiritual dominion, and even aspired to the honors and authority of dukes, marquises, and counts of the empire. The nobles were forever resisting, in their respective domains, the assumptions of the clergy in matters of jurisdiction and other affairs. These, therefore, seized the opportunity which was offered them by the superstition of the times, to obtain from the kings these, the ancient rights of the nobles; and, as the influence of the bishops over the people was greater than that of the nobility, the kings, to secure the services of so powerful a priesthood, generally granted their requests. Thus they became bishops and abbots clothed with titles and dignities so foreign to their spiritual office,—reverend dukes, marquises, counts, and viscounts!

“It was not, however, by these means only that they sought dominion over the world. They had a thousand arts to rivet their power into the souls of the people. COUNCILS were one of them. As if the sacerdotal name and inculcations were not influential enough, they sought, by collecting together all the dignities of the church into one place, to invest them with a more awful character, and to render the enactments of these priestly congresses everlasting and indissoluble laws. These enactments were such as the worship of images, decreed in the council of Nice, 787; the holding of a festival to the Virgin Mother, instituted by the council of Mentz in the ninth century; taking the cup of the sacrament from the laity; and a declaration of the lawfulness of breaking the most solemn engagements made to heretics, by the council of Constance, in the fifteenth century, with a thousand other despotic measures equally inimical to all freedom of opinion, and destructive to the rights of mankind.”

A fearful policy prevailed at that gloomy period, when “the

man of sin " had throned himself in the temple of God, and exalted himself " above all that is called God, and that is worshipped." Shadows were substituted for substance, theological life was smothered under sacerdotal gorgeousness, and the people at large were taught to be content with such instruction as they could derive only through the medium of priests. Men sat in judgment on God's record of salvation, the charter of our immortality, and, sifting its precious contents to suit their own selfish ends, decided what was proper to be communicated and what to be withheld. The medicine of life was dealt out with a sparing and cautious hand, and mixed with foreign ingredients, " like arsenic or hemlock, which are only safe when administered in a diluted form, and in small quantities." In allusion to this condition of things, President Du Paty is represented by Landor as saying to Peter Leopold, " Wherever there is a substitute for morality ; where ceremonies stand in the place of duties ; where the confession of a fault before a priest is more meritorious than never to have committed it ; where virtues and duties are vicarious ; where crimes can be expiated after death for money ; where, by breaking a wafer, you open the gates of heaven, — probity and honor, if they exist at all, exist in the temperament of the individual. Hence a general indifference to virtue in others ; hence the best men in Italy do not avoid the worst ; hence the diverging rays of opinion can be brought to no focus ; nothing can be consumed by it, nothing warmed." With equal truth Middleton said to Magliabechi, " You tell us that you do not worship images, but worship in them what they express. Be it so. The pagans did the same, neither better nor worse. What will you answer to the accusation of worshipping a living man ? Adoration is offered undisguisedly and openly to priests and monks, however profligate and infamous their lives may have been and be. Every pope is adored by the holy college on his elevation."

A writer in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* of July, 1840, reviewing a work by the famous French preacher Lacordaire, notices the fact that Popery has every where been the same,

and that its modern aspect is by no means sufficiently improved. Says he, "Great pains have been taken of late, not only on the continent, but especially in this country, to propagate the belief that Romanism is synonymous with every kind of liberality, as well as the security and order of the state; than which assertion, triumphantly refuted by history, there can be none advanced more entirely groundless. In the language of Popery, the state means the church, and *vice versâ*; excluding the co-existence of any other power not subordinate to it. The orthodox Papist must look upon every heretical government as illegal, and as that which they are bound in conscience to overthrow. The absolute submission, indeed, which the pope requires from his followers, is incompatible with their duties as subjects of an independent state; and, to take one instance out of a thousand, we may refer to the words of a pope's legate addressed to Casimir III., king of Poland. When the latter refused to give the see of Cracow to a Papal nominee, saying that he would rather lose a kingdom than comply with such a request, the legate replied, that it would be better that three kingdoms should perish, than that a word of the pope should be set at nought. This sublime of despotism is linked with moral degradation of the worst description; one of the popes, Alexander VI., having boastingly said, that the more foolish a religion was, the more fitted was it for the people. To keep the latter in the most abject slavery is the main object of Popery, and this principle was well expressed by a talented supporter\* of the system, when he represented the state in the form of a triangle, the top of which was occupied by the clergy, and the body by the king and nobles. The remainder of the nation was left out of his construction. No wonder, then, that in whatever country Popery succeeded in establishing its power, it left behind its pestilential effects, not to be obliterated for centuries. Look at the Roman States, the finest district in the world, converted by the Romish priesthood into

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\* Orichovius.

a morass; look at Spain, Portugal, and Poland, during the sway of the Jesuits, still suffering from its baneful influence. Hence it has been invariably the case that, whenever a nation endeavored to rise from a state of degradation, it has always shaken off the Papal yoke. And what does Popery say of such spiritual regeneration? Does it not always stigmatize it as the *tyranny of human reason*? Lest we should be accused of misrepresenting facts, we extract a passage from the letter of Abbé Lacordaire. The abbé, well known by his controversy with Lamennais, is now one of the most distinguished preachers in France, and a zealous defender of Papacy.

“War,” says he, “has been in Europe for fifty years. . . . But where is that war? It is higher than opinions, higher than kings, higher than nations; it is between human reason and faith—between Roman Catholic and rational power. The Papal see, therefore, does not join any party, does not interfere with any form of government, but keeps up a friendly intercourse with every country in which, as, for instance, in Belgium and in France, the *tyranny of reason* has been put down; it protests against the violence offered to church and conscience wherever, as in Spain and Portugal, *that tyranny raises its head.*” It will be easy to see that the *tyranny of reason*, here so much complained of, means nothing more than a purer sense of religion, liberty of conscience, and, above all, independence of the Papacy.

The Roman Catholic church is a strange combination of things the most absurd and the most sublime. For instance, how absurd that so many millions of rational beings, some of them enlightened in the highest degree, should submit themselves in spiritual matters to the dictation of a poor frail man, the pope at Rome! How absurd the interminable and unintelligible ceremonies of the church! How absurd is the doctrine of celibacy and transubstantiation! How absurd the sanctity which devotees attach to the bones and other relics of the canonized! How absurd that thousands and tens of

thousands of men and women should immure themselves in melancholy seclusion from the world, under the notion that they are best serving God by abstaining from all intercourse with the creatures he has made.

But there are many associations connected with the Papacy by no means contemptible; on the contrary, glorious and sublime. The Catholics were a church long before England was a state, and fought the battle of civilization a dozen centuries before America was known. They coped with those northern tribes who subdued them; and even while yielding to physical force, they taught them manners and arts, and led them towards the refinements of social intercourse. It was a church clothing itself with all the authority of ancient days; "the word of God in its hands, both tradition and Scripture; believing it had God's infallible and exclusive inspiration at its heart,—for such no doubt was the real belief,—and actually, through its Christian character, combining in itself the best interests of mankind, no wonder it prevailed. Its countenance became as lightning. It stood and measured the earth. It drove asunder the nations. It went forth in the mingling tides of civilized corruption and barbarian ferocity, for the salvation of the people—conquering and to conquer; its brightness as the light." But this was in her earlier and better days, when she owed no such allegiance and subordination as the church of England does to political authorities, but both claimed and exercised supremacy. We should not forget that the Catholic church has taken eighteen centuries to grow; that it was the heir, not only of Mosaic institutions, but of all classical antiquity; that many of the ages it traversed were ages of barbarism, when the will of the strongest was law; that while it has served as a spiritual guide to each generation, each generation has stamped upon it its own impress; that while it was encompassed by imperfection, and all the social as well as political institutions of its domain were rude in the extreme, it could not be expected suddenly to attain perfection in contrast with the universal degradation it had to oppose; and that,

notwithstanding the mighty evils against which it had perpetually to struggle, it has served powerfully to civilize all Europe, and, through Europe, the world. The Papacy has ever been a tremendous power for good as well as for evil. It put its foot upon the necks of kings, distributed crowns, consecrated banners for the conquest of the British Islands, and arbitrarily disposed of empires in the old world and new. It is a church that has boasted of always having the power to work miracles, and has claimed to extend its influence even into the unseen regions and eternal cycles of the spiritual world. It is a church which, in its palmy days, could scorn nobility and blood, while they were the objects of superlative popular veneration; which took the butcher's boy and raised him to the highest ecclesiastical eminence; gave him prerogatives that enabled him to look down on princes, with all their pomp and pride, and make them the mere puppets of his political schemes,—a church which survived the "reformation" with power enough yet in her hands to shame and baffle the most successful aspirants to universal empire; and which, even in modern times, has shown itself the church of the enslaved as well as the triumphant, the poor as well as the rich, degraded multitudes as well as dignified classes, and has been true to the forlorn, when most destitute and despairing. Let us recognize and generously appreciate what Catholicity has done for the religious culture of the world, when no other source for such culture existed, as well as what it has done for every other species of human improvement. It has preserved for us, and not for us only, but for all coming time, the immense and invaluable treasures of Greek and Roman literature. It kept alive a taste for art, even in those barbarous times, when on every hand the feeling of the beautiful seemed ready to be destroyed. To it we owe the most exquisite music, and those venerable cathedrals, which reveal to both sense and soul the loftiest poetry and sublimest genius of the past. It is not wonderful that the Catholic church has such a hold upon the affections of those who have grown up under its influence. It

is not only their church, but the church of their fathers, and is made beautiful and engrossing to their hearts by a multitude of the most thrilling associations. It is the church which in infancy they were taught to love, and which threw the whole magic of its myriad hues on their childhood's brow and youthful path. In many a dark hour its priests, its consecrated utensils, and symbolic rites, have imparted to them consolation, when from no other source it could be derived. Therefore, right or wrong, for weal or woe, does the Catholic profoundly love his church. Nor should we indiscriminately condemn the faith and practice from which we so widely differ. Catholicism has doubtless added many things to the word of God, but she also preserved most of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, the depravity of man, salvation through the atonement, the essential divinity of the Redeemer, and the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Protestants are in no great danger of dishonoring themselves or their faith, by being mindful of the respect which is due that ancient class of Christians, in whose ranks have shone the names of Laurence de Bilva, Sadolet, Borromeo, Vincent de Paul, Pascal, and Fenelon.

These remarks, we think, are not in much danger of being perverted. No right-minded person will accuse us of undue partialities for the Catholic church, because, when compelled, by the nature of our discussion, to refer to its history, we magnanimously recognize the merits it is well known to the intelligent to possess. We frankly affirm, in the language of Channing, "Of all Protestants, we have fewest sympathies with the Romish church. We go farther than our brethren in rejecting her mysteries, those monuments of human weakness; and as to her claims to infallibility, we repel them with an indignation not to be understood by sects, which, calling themselves Protestant, renounce in words, but assert in practice, a Popish immunity from error, a Popish control over the faith of their brethren. To us, the spiritual tyranny of Popery is as detestable as Oriental despotism. When we look back on the



history of Papal Rome, we see her, in the days of her power, stained with the blood of martyrs, gorged with rapine, drunk with luxury and crime. But what then? Is it righteous to involve a whole church in guilt, which, after all, belongs to a powerful few? Is it righteous to forget that Protestantism, too, has blood on her robes? Is it righteous to forget that Time, the greatest of reformers, has exerted his silent, purifying power on the Catholic as well as on ourselves? Shall we refuse to see, and to own with joy, that Christianity, even under Papal corruptions, puts forth a divine power? that men cannot wholly spoil it of its celestial efficacy? that, even under its most disastrous eclipse, it still sheds beams to guide the soul to heaven? that there exists in human nature, when loyal to conscience, a power to neutralize error, and to select and incorporate with itself what is pure and ennobling in the most incongruous system? Shall we shut our eyes on the fact, that among the clergy of the Romish church have risen up illustrious imitators of that magnanimous apostle, before whom Felix trembled,—men who, in the presence of nobles and kings, have bowed to God alone, have challenged for his law uncompromising homage, and rebuked, in virtue's own undaunted tone, triumphant guilt?"

Two general points have now been considered—first, that Popery originated in degeneracy; secondly, that it flourished most in the darkest times. It remains to suggest, thirdly, that it is destined to disappear before increasing light.

Under this general topic, we will consider three particulars—first, in the primitive days of Christianity, all the churches stood on a perfect equality; secondly, of these churches Christ was recognized as the only head; thirdly, all revolutions and reformations in modern policies tend perpetually toward the original condition of religious affairs.

In the first place, no fact in history is clearer than that, as ordered by Christ and executed by the apostles, all the churches stood on a perfect equality with each other. The New Testament uses the word *churches*, as applied to local bodies of

Christians living in the same region, and sometimes in near neighborhood ; as, “the churches throughout all Judea ;” Paul “went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches ;” “so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” We read of the churches of Galatia, the churches in Asia, Macedonia, &c., &c. Paul says to the Corinthian church, “I robbed *other churches*, taking wages of them to do *you* service.” The force of the appeal rests wholly on the churches in question being regarded as separate, distinct bodies ; otherwise he should have said, “I robbed other branches or dioceses, or parishes, of *the church*, to supply this branch.”

The more magnanimous and reliable class of Episcopal and Papal writers recognize and acknowledge the scriptural truth on this great subject. Archbishop Whately, in his essays on “The Kingdom of Christ,” says, “The church is undoubtedly *one*, and so is the human race *one* ; but not as a *society*. It was from the first composed of distinct societies, which were called one, because formed on common principles. It is one society only when considered as to its *future* existence. The circumstances of its having one common head, (Christ,) one Spirit, one Father, are points of unity which no more make the church one society on earth, than the circumstance of all men having the same Creator, and being derived from the same Adam, renders the human race one family.” And again, “The church is *one*, then, not as consisting of one society, but because the various societies, or churches, were then modelled, and ought still to be so, on the same principles ; and because they enjoy common privileges,—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Accordingly, the Holy Ghost, through his agents and apostles, has not left any detailed account of the formation of any Christian society ; but he has very distinctly marked the great principles on which all were to be founded, whatever distinctions may exist amongst them. In short, the foundation of the church by the apostles was not analogous to the work of Romulus, or Solon ; it was not, properly, the foundation of

Christian societies which occupied them, but the establishment of the principles on which Christians in all ages might form societies for themselves." Gieseler says, vol. i. § 29, "The new churches every where *formed themselves* on the model of the mother church at Jerusalem. At the head of each were the elders, all officially of equal rank," &c.

Says Mosheim, vol. i. pp. 80—86, Murdock's 1st edition, "ALL THE CHURCHES IN THOSE PRIMITIVE TIMES WERE INDEPENDENT BODIES, or none of them subject to the jurisdiction of any other. For, though the churches which were founded by the apostles themselves, frequently had the honor shown them to be consulted in difficult and doubtful cases, yet they had no judicial authority, no control, no power of giving laws. On the contrary, *it is clear as the noonday, that all Christian churches had equal rights, and were in all respects on a footing of equality.*

In giving an account of the government of the church during the *second century*, the same distinguished historian remarks, "The form of church government which began to exist in the preceding century, was, in this, more industriously established and confirmed in all parts. *One president, or bishop, presided over each church. He was created by the common suffrage of the whole people.*

"During the greater part of this century, all the churches continued to be, as at first, *independent* of each other; or, were connected by no consociations or confederations." — Vol. i. p. 142.

The Magdeburg Centuriators, in their famous work, published in 1559—1574, in describing the constitution and discipline of the churches of the first and second centuries, furnish the following testimony with respect to the republican spirit of primitive Christianity: "A visible church was an assembly, or congregation of persons, who believed and followed the writings of the prophets and apostles; which should be composed of persons regenerated by the word and sacraments, though there might be in this assembly many persons, who,

though they agreed with the regenerate in doctrine, were, nevertheless, not sanctified in heart. Clemens [of Alexandria] says, I call not *a place*, but a congregation of the elect, a church." — Century ii. ch. 4, p. 39, ed. Basil. 1624.

Of excommunication they say, "The right of excommunication was committed to the hands of the church and its ministers." — Cent. i. lib. 2, ch. 3, p. 274.

"The power of announcing the remission of the sins of penitent offenders was also in the hands of the church; though, for the sake of order, except in cases of necessity, it was exercised by the ministers of the church." — *Ib.* p. 276.

"The whole assembly, or church, in any particular place — including laymen and clergy — had power to elect, call, and ordain suitable ministers, and to depose and avoid false teachers, or those whose evil lives threatened injury to the church. These things appear from the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the power of the keys; for the keys were given to the whole church. But the church, if she calls her ministers to act, does nothing else than commit to them the keys. That power, therefore, pertains to the whole of the church. Moreover, the examples in the New Testament teach the same thing; for, in the first of Acts, it appears that not by the apostles alone, but by the whole church, Matthias was put in the place of Judas; and in Acts, sixth chapter, the deacons were chosen, called, and ordained, not by the apostles alone, but also by the rest of the church. In Acts, thirteenth chapter, the whole church of Antioch gathered together by command of God, and sent forth Paul and Barnabas to teach the gospel to the Gentiles." — *Ib.* p. 299.

The following summary view of the constitution, government, and rights of the churches of the second century is given by these learned ecclesiastical historians.

"If any one examines the approved writers of this century, [the second,] he will see that the form of church government was *very like a democracy*, (*δημοκρατίας*.) For each church had equal power of preaching the pure word of God, of ad-

ministering the sacraments, of absolving and excommunicating heretics and wicked persons, of observing the ceremonies received from the apostles, or, even, for the sake of edification, of instituting new ones; of choosing ministers, of calling, of ordaining, and, for just causes, of deposing them again; of assembling councils and synods; of instituting and supporting schools; and, in matters of doubt or controversy, of demanding the opinion of others; of judging and deciding."—Cent. ii. ch. 7, pp. 102—103.

These and numerous other testimonies which might be adduced, go to sustain the following positions, viz.: "1. The apostolic churches were *single congregations of Christians*, with their appropriate officers. 2. The government of these churches was essentially *democratical*. Each church elected its own officers, determined by what particular regulations it would be governed, exercised discipline upon its members; in a word, *did every thing that those possessing the supreme power were authorized to do*.

"3. Their officers at first consisted simply of *presbyters* (who were also called bishops, or overseers, and elders) and of *deacons*; and when, for prudential reasons, a president was chosen from among the elders of a single church, and the title of *bishop*, or overseer, was given to him, to distinguish him from his coëqual elders, his authority was confined to *a single church*, or religious society, and was essentially unlike a modern diocesan bishop. 4. That all the churches in those primitive times, though bound together by a common faith and order, were *equal and independent bodies*, subject to no earthly power nor authoritative control beyond themselves."

We proceed to remark, secondly, that of these equal churches, Christ was recognized as the only head. The supreme power of Christ in and over his churches has been well indicated by Mr. Crowell, in his admirable work, called the "Church Members' Manual," p. 61. Like every judicious writer on this solemn topic, he expresses his positions in the language of Scripture itself. As, 1. The sole power of making

laws for all churches is in him, and is not transmitted to any other. James iv. 12. The only power given to churches is to publish and execute his laws. Matt. xxviii. 20. Being perfect and able to make the man of God *perfect to every good work*, (2 Tim. iii. 17,) they need no addition. 2. That He only can erect and establish the true church constitution. Heb. iii. 3—6. No man has a right to set up a church except according to that frame or pattern. 3. All offices, ordinary and extraordinary, are established by him, and the authority belonging to them, (Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 5—18,) as well as all gifts of wisdom and grace to discharge the duties of every station in the church, (Col. ii. 3—9,) together with all spiritual efficiency to make these gifts and offices effectual for the perfecting of saints and the conversion of sinners. Matt. xxviii. 20. Col. i. 29.

Speaking of the nature of church power, the same writer adds, pp. 61, 62, 81, “A church is to learn, and then to execute, the will of Christ. Its power is therefore exclusively spiritual and executive. It has no right to the use of political power, nor to form any coalition with the state; and if it does so, it ceases to be a true church of Christ. Nor has a church the right to use force, either directly or indirectly, to accomplish its purposes. It may persuade, exhort, entreat, admonish, and rebuke, to produce obedience, but has no right to resort to corporal or pecuniary pains and penalties.

“This spiritual power must be used in an executive sense only. Christ has made all the laws by which it is to be governed. He has delegated no legislative power to any church. The right of each to execute his laws among its members, implies the right to study those laws for itself, and to adopt that construction which the united wisdom of its members believe to be true.

“To the same point are the directions of our Savior in Matt. xviii. 15—20, in regard to the course to be pursued in cases of private quarrels between brethren. The final resort is, ‘if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen

man and a publican.' As the offence which subjects to excommunication is 'neglecting to hear [that is, to obey] *the church*,' the whole body, of course, and not its officers, must pass the sentence. He connects the solemn assurance, 'Whatsoever *ye* [the church] shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.' The righteous decisions of every church shall be ratified in heaven. And then, as if to forestall the inquiry, What is a church? he immediately adds, that it is a *company of believers*, however small, united in covenant to obey him. 'For where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, there am I in the midst of them.'

"As it is certain that each church is invested by the Savior with the highest ecclesiastical, disciplinary, and judicial power, it follows, necessarily, that each is an independent body, complete in itself for all the purposes of a church on earth. Although this point has already been proved, yet this furnishes an independent, and alone a sufficient, proof of the same. There can be no higher act of sovereignty performed by a nation, than that of expulsion from citizenship."

The beginning of ecclesiastical degeneracy, and its frightful consequences, are compendiously stated by Gieseler, sect. 49, vol. i, wherein he shows most clearly that the independence of the early churches was lost by laxity in discipline, till heresies had crept in, and then by "the churches which held to the ancient faith making common cause" against the heretics. "Thus was developed the idea of a catholic (universal) church, as opposed to and excluding all heretics; and this idea, in its turn, as well as a common interest, led to a more intimate union." "The result was, first, prelacy, with its worldliness and pride; and finally, papacy, with its legion of abominations. Let churches, then, beware of two things: *First*, of neglecting discipline by suffering persons who have adopted dangerous heresies to retain membership; and *Second*, of combining their power for any disciplinary purpose, however urgent or desirable."

We have shown the condition of equality among the primitive

churches, and the fact that Christ was universally recognized as the only lawgiver and head : it remains, finally, to indicate how that all modern revolutions tend to bring the church back to its original condition of republican simplicity and power. Doubtless complete victory will be but gradually attained, and in a manner best adapted to exercise religious patience and faith ; but the ultimate triumph will be both certain and glorious. God deals with the modern church as he did with the ancient in view of the Canaanites, which foes might have been quickly destroyed, had not infinite wisdom seen fit to discomfit them in a more moderate way. Said God, "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. In all the movements of divine Providence, as Lamartine has well remarked, "there is evidently a double motion of decomposition and organization at the same time. The creative spirit is at work in proportion that the destructive spirit destroys. One faith supersedes another ; one form is substituted for another form. Wherever the past crumbles to pieces, the future is all prepared to appear behind the ruins. The transition is slow and rude, as every transition is, in which the passions or the interests of men have to fight in their progress, or in which the social classes or the different countries march with an unequal pace ; in which some will obstinately go back, whilst the general mass advances. Their confusion, dust, ruins, darkness prevail for the moment ; but from time to time also, the wind disperses that cloud of dust, which conceals both the track and the end, and those who stand on the eminence distinguish the march of events, recognize the promise of futurity, and perceive the earliest dawning of a day which is to enlighten a vast horizon."

All great revolutions tend, sooner or later, completely to disenthral the church of Christ. Such are the designs of Providence, and such will be the final result. Whatever may be



the personal views of those who excite and execute national commotions, their chief producing cause is more latent and profound than the influences which the superficial observe. It is no other than the need, universally and invincibly felt, of a fairer and higher social order, founded upon that exalted and immense development of liberty which Christianity has rendered necessary by unfolding itself to the soul of the masses in the true conception and feeling of justice. Hence are the collisions which occur between the multitudes and their oppressors conservative of the most salutary principles, conformed to that law of progress which rules humanity, and which to it is a perpetual pledge of a grand epoch of complete renovation, the signal of future victories by which, subordinating national policies to its light and force, will consummate its glory by establishing the human race in the unity of righteousness and peace. To the love of liberty which the spirit of Christ excites and nourishes in the popular bosom, more than any other cause, are joined a principle of order which controls it, and a charity unbounded in its exercise, which unite and consolidate those healthful elements that distempered ultraism tends to isolate and disperse. By her disinthralling and ennobling power, Christianity delivers man from the yoke of man; by the principle of order it contains, and the mutual esteem it creates, it perpetually conducts mankind, free in Jesus Christ, to social harmony and national improvement, in anticipation of the promised day which approaches, when it will establish all ranks and conditions in one perfect whole. "And there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

The world does not need, nor does it desire, the false and destructive freedom of anarchy which traces itself in blood, and which, in the end, plants a cimeter over the horrible ruins it has formed; but that real and enduring liberty, founded upon righteousness, and inseparable from it, pure as heaven, whence its last development will descend, and holy as God, who has graven an ineffaceable desire for its enjoyment in the breast of every human being. To the unlimited possession of this, a

consummation so devoutly to be wished, all the grand upheavings and down-dashings of our day conduct. We have reason to believe that the period is not remote when all our race will come to enjoy, without let or hinderance, the inestimable blessings, civil and religious, which the Creator designed for all. Then, and not till then, Christianity, disengaged from the clouds which have so long obscured her, will appear, in primitive splendor, above the horizon of society, as a star, to enlighten, vivify, and guide the people, and toward which they will direct their enraptured gaze, accompanying its magnificent course with harmonious chantings of joy incessantly renewed.

Two systems have for centuries contended for the empire of the world — the system of freedom and the system of absolutism; doctrines which establish society on the basis of justice, or those which subjugate it to brutal force. The future destinies of the human race depend on the issue of the final battles soon to be fought. If the victory remains to absolute force, then, stooping to the earth like burdened beasts, mournful, mute, and panting, must men, lacerated by the scourge of ruthless masters, continue to plod, moistening with sweat and tears the rough furrows they upturn, with no other hope but to bury at length under the obscurest turf the bloody burden of their miseries. But, on the contrary, should justice triumph, — as we are certain it will, — then will humanity advance in the predestined path of progressive glory, with elevated head, serene brow, and eye fixed upon that auspicious future, a radiant sanctuary wherein Providence has deposited the highest benefits for all who bravely persevere. The conflict becomes keener and more general every day. On the one side are the great multitudes of the people, exhausted of suffering and patience, yet struggling in desire and hope. These masses of outraged humanity are profoundly moved by the rousing up of the too long dormant consciousness of all within them that constitutes the dignity and grandeur of man. They are rendered potent by their faith in prevailing justice, their love of liberty, and that firmness of will which makes them invincible.

On the other hand, all absolute powers are leagued against popular rights, with their armies and agents of every kind, a mighty organization of tyrannous iniquity, whose strangling elements are interchained in one isolated and compressed whole, beyond which there is no movement but between two bayonets, no speech but between the malicious ears of two spies. Lamennais, himself a Catholic, and the victim of hierarchical oppression, has recorded many noble sentiments on this point, of which the following specimen is a literal translation: "Spiritual liberty has for expression the liberty of religion or of worship, the liberty of teaching, of the press, and of association. Where one of these is not complete, and above all, the last, the others are but a vain name. Do not ask under what form of society the people live thus deprived of their natural rights; ask under what tyranny."—*Œuvres Complètes*, tome vii. p. 286.

We believe that the Papacy has usurped individual rights, and for this the appropriate retribution is at hand. For centuries it has been imposing restraints on human nature, where development should be the grand aim. The soul is not to be cramped, but cultivated. True religion is a liberating power, tending constantly to provide a wider and purer sphere for the exercise of both intellect and heart. It puts a people in a condition to be saved, by diffusing among them the word of life and the power of love. Before it the mountains sink, rough places become plain, and the great salvation is revealed to all without partiality or disguise. Christianity teaches that our highest happiness, as well as foremost duty, lies in obeying God rather than man, even the best of men; since a church made and ruled by human hands *kills the substance* of religious belief, whereas the spirit that moulds the church of Christ *vivifies the form*. In the Papal system, the most prominent things are men—priests, bishops, popes; but in Christianity, Christ is all and in all. Unlike the Mosiac system, it was not an ecclesiastical, sacerdotal, and hierarchical compound to confuse and oppress; but, as all the declarations of

the New Testament prove, the religion given to the world by our Lord is "life and spirit" only. "The kingdom of God," saith Jesus, "cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

There is an infinite disparity between inward graces and outward institutions. Christ came to elevate mankind equally above Judaism and Paganism, — to make them superior to every form of religion dependent on symbols, and administered through artistic representations. Speculative philosophy and priestly craft are often inclined to divert the popular eye from the original source of purest light, in order that earthly lamps, ministering to selfish purposes only, may be ostentatiously employed; but the highest obligation resting on religious teachers, as the only means of saving the souls of men, is to woo all to the unveiled beamings of the one great, free, moral Sun. It is his light alone that has made generation after generation beautiful and blessed by patriots, sages, martyrs, prophets, and apostles, men facing the dungeon, the sword, and the flame, rather than desert their allegiance to the truth of God. Contemplating these, we ought to be still more confirmed in the belief that humanity should never bow to a fragment of itself; that the only infallibility to which we should kneel is the infallibility of conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit — that most sacred of all creeds, which is written by the finger of God in the depths of every renovated heart. As a system of ecclesiastical domination, it is evident that Popery is rapidly going to decay. Human nature is tired of the political and theological dismemberment in which, for centuries, it has been living, and yearns intensely to unfold itself once more in the exercise of natural faculties and rights. A new era is beginning, when Man and the divine prerogatives about to be restored to him will constitute the noblest privilege and most exalted name. The hour is at hand when the true

glory of a state will be regarded as consisting, not in the aggrandizement of wealth and honors among a few exclusive individuals, but in the elevated character, the magnanimous spirit, and improved condition, of the generality of the citizens. Now, it is not a Roman Catholic church, but a Human Catholic, a truly Christian church, which alone will meet and respond to the wants of this new era; a church which will resemble the infinitude of nature, wherein the lowliest things and the sublimest things are found side by side, and which will seek to gather children into its bosom, not by the tricks of priest-craft and inquisitorial coercion, but by intensest love, most generous freedom, and the utmost ministration to human aspirings and needs.

When Jesus arose to work through the simplest means the most wondrous of revolutions, mankind had so much forgotten God, that they had come to waste their affection and reverence on material emblems of the Deity, rather than on Deity himself. This depraved inclination of our race has ever formed the chief strength of the Papacy. It ought ever to have been the prompter and promoter of intellectual progress, and its response to this requirement of the true church should have been equally conducive with its moral beatitude to its permanent power. But its intellectualization and moralization have not maintained an abiding vitality, because they have not been the cardinal motives of church polity. The gospel is profoundly republican: it shows how little regard it has for the power of man, by teaching its followers, as their primary lesson, to submit themselves only to God. It constitutes progress an autocracy, and consequently prefers that man should in every thing be his own master. This fundamental truth the Papacy has either ignorantly overlooked or unjustly suppressed. But it is now too late, however much it may be desired, to keep the masses longer in ignorance on this point. The spirit of the age is too intelligent and free, to suffer the chains of ignorance and injustice to be permanently rivetted on their minds. The multitudes have learned to weigh many things,

and among other valuable lessons they have learned their own weight in the affairs of both church and state.

Revolutionary principles, springing from the gospel of Christ, have for eighteen centuries been in a continued process of growth, through all vicissitudes generating the means by which to act on society with fresher vigor and more comprehensive force. This spirit of renovation and improvement has not ceased to operate, even during those long periods of apparent suspension in which Imperial or Papal policy has given for a time a sinister direction and sombre hue to the movement. It is still at work, having much done, and being in a condition, undoubtedly, to do vastly more for humanity in the times at hand. We are, perhaps, to feel its greatest momentum and witness its mightiest shocks. This is a revolutionary age in the best sense; as all the omnipotence of nature and Providence are combined to energize freedom and promote progress. All things powerful and good coalesce to diffuse the spirit of free institutions, vindicate them from reproach, fortify the feeble for their defence, and plead for the injured of every class. The whole civilized world is heaving like an ocean, and the great issues of freedom are working themselves clearly out amid the throes of the storm. The great designs of Providence are unfolding with tremendous import, before which the arrogance of petty monarchy is lost like the buzz of an insect in the thunder-crash. In the light and liberality that begin to distinguish our age, read the following dictum of Gregory IX.: "There is only one name in the world — the Pope. He only can bestow the investitures of kings; all princes ought to kiss his feet. No one can judge him; his simple election makes him a saint; he has never erred; he never will err. He can depose kings, and absolve subjects from their allegiance." A church holding such principles cannot walk in proportion to the speed of all around it. Hence says Francisque Bouvet, "Roman Catholicism has vanished at the aspect of civilization. It is undergoing due suffering for the evil of having subjected all spiritually to its views of temporal aggran-

dizement." Doubtless the Romish church did much good in its day ; but it has fulfilled its mission, and has become, in the estimation of most persons, a hollowness, and a lie ; therefore, in the progress of truth, all its trumpery must be swept away.

"Bulls, pardons, relics, cows, black, white, and gray,  
Upwhirled, and flying o'er the ethereal plain,  
Fast bound for Limbo Lake."

The great foe of the Papacy is human nature rejuvenated, with a keener consciousness of its powers, catching clearer glimpses of its legitimate career, panting for free action and perfect development. Man will soon learn that there is something diviner than ceremonies or creeds ; will recognize in Jesus Christ the only celestial example, the only Master we are bound to obey. The common people are winning a familiarity with grand principles, political as well as religious ; and this kind of knowledge is death to all tyranny. Christianity displays truth and discloses happiness in its own records ; and these were given to the church to be spread out before all mankind. Because the Papal prerogatives have been employed in restricting the circulation of divine truth, humanity, instinctively soaring towards the needful light, like a shaded plant towards the sun, has outgrown the pope. Spiritual despotism can no longer with impunity forge fetters for the mind, since man, the indignant victim of superstition, now renovated in spirit and advancing with unshackled limbs, has learned to stoop only to gather up the fragmentary chains that lie shattered all along freedom's path, and hurl them at the sham infallibility it has unwillingly too long revered.

The peculiar tendency of the popular movements of this age is to expansion, diffusion, and universality ; a tendency directly opposed to the exclusiveness and monopoly which characterize the institutions of the dark ages. The masses scorn an abject position, and are determined to rise from the dust. The many have assumed and worthily fill the posts once restricted to a few ; the privileges once sacred to a segment of human-

ity's circle now are flowing equally round the whole. It is beginning to be understood that, of all rights, religious truth is the property most dear to every man. This is stronger than councils or popes ; it is the spirit of primitive Christianity, the divine beauty of which will put to shame the hollow dignities of hierarchical pomps, and pour the splendors of salvation all over earth. The ruling forces of universal empire are latent in her spirit, ready to be unfolded every where ; and, however reluctant the bigoted may be to yield to her sway, the hour hastens when all will be compelled to bow to her sovereignty of soul. The truthful earnestness of the true church of Christ must speedily be crowned with complete success.

“Her weapons, like the sword  
Of Michael, from the armory of God,  
Are given her so tempered, that neither Pope  
Nor Papist can resist their edge.”

But let us remind ourselves, again, that, however great have been the degeneracy and crimes of the Papal church, her monuments of usefulness are numerous, and her example is not only a beacon to warn, but a model in many respects to be admired. With fierce bigotry she may have armed herself with the frightful enginery of the inquisition, and inflicted the most terrible injuries on the bodies as well as the souls of men. But she can never do the like again, even if she desired it, which we do not believe. It is something worse than folly to overlook the fact that the Papacy has participated in the progressive spirit of our age, as well as all other powers. Indeed, the pope of to-day stands in the front rank of national reformers. He has struck the key-stone from the arch of feudal power, and the whole infamous edifice is now tumbling around his own, as well as many other regal heads. Concerning the commingled excellences and evils of the Papal progress, Guizot, in his “History of Civilization,” has well said, “Human thought and liberty, however fettered, however confined for room and space in which to exercise their faculties, oppose with so much



energy every attempt to enslave them, that their reaction makes even despotism itself to yield, and give up something every moment. This took place in the very bosom of the Christian church. We have seen heresy proscribed, the right of free inquiry condemned, a contempt shown for individual reason, the principle of the imperative transmission of doctrines by human authority established. And yet where can we find a society in which individual reason more boldly developed itself than in the church? What are sects and heresies, if not the fruit of individual opinions? These sects, these heresies, all these oppositions which arose in the Christian church, are the most decisive proof of the life and moral activity which reigned within her; a life stormy, painful, sown with perils, with errors, and crimes, yet splendid and mighty, and which has given place to the noblest developments of intelligence and mind."

The tide of improvement is sweeping forward through all Europe with increased volume and speed. A mighty influence is at work every where, tempering the clay to mould great men, true Christians, and effective reformers. How unlike is the condition of things this moment around the Papal throne, compared with what it was only four years ago, when Mazzini complained, in view of the martyrdom of some of his co-patriots, "There was in these men a will of iron, which only hardened on the anvil of obstacle. They wished to die; they had perceived the great cause which yet hinders us from being free — the want of harmony between thought and action. They knew that the national opinion — the opinion which says that an Italy ought to be — is general amongst us; but they felt that, even to the present day, it is only an opinion; that faith is wanting; the faith which compels men to incarnate that which they think in acts; the faith which teaches that life is a representation, continual, progressive, of what we believe to be truth and justice. And this faith they saw no means of teaching in the Italy of to-day, without press, without parliament, without schools, without liberty of conscience, without any thing to render education possible, except it was by example

They wished to set this example ; they wished to bear witness ; they wished to say to their fellow-citizens, ‘ *See, the belief in an Italy to come, the belief in the duty of ACTION to engender that, is so true, that we step to death for it !* ’ Tyranny, they would say, can stifle all except the last cry of the man who dies upon the scaffold for his faith.”

But not in vain have martyrs toiled, wept, prayed, taught, and died. Their redeeming spirit survives to witness earth’s destiny, as, in these auspicious days, it is gloriously working out. Chains are sundering, truth is spreading, shouts of redeemed nations are to heaven rising, and soon, from his effulgent throne, will the sun look down on all *the world without a heretic, and the church without a pope.*

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP.

IN the two preceding chapters, we have considered some of the unhappy consequences flowing from an alliance of the church with Imperial and Papal power. But there are evils connected with the amalgamation of ecclesiastical and civil institutions under other forms of not less magnitude. Unfortunately, Protestant establishments present to the world, in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, the most intimate and injurious coalitions of church and state.

We shall be likely to apprehend some of the iniquitous features of this system, while we observe that bishops are not essential to constitute a church, were never designed to exercise lordship over equals in Christ, and are no longer needed to oppress the sacred brotherhood.

In the first place, let us prove historically that, according to the Episcopal meaning of the word, bishops are not essential

to constitute a church. The authorities we cite are from standard works only, used in all theological schools, and most generally approved.

Says Coleman, in his work on the "Apostolical and Primitive Church," p. 255, "In the beginning, there was but one church in a city, to which all the Christian converts belonged. But the care of the church was intrusted, not to one man, but to several, who constituted a *college of presbyters*, and divided the duties of their office among themselves. This arrangement was analogous to that of the Jewish synagogue, after which the church was organized. A plurality of persons every where appear in the Acts as the representatives of the church at Jerusalem. They represent, also, the church at Ephesus, (Acts xx. 17—28,) and at Philippi, (Phil. i. 1.) Titus was also instructed to ordain *elders* in all the cities in Crete. In such a college of elders, sharing a joint responsibility in the care of the churches, it would obviously be convenient, if not indispensable, for one of their number to act as the moderator or president of their assemblies. Such a designation, however, would confer on the presiding elder no *official* superiority over his fellow-presbyters; but, coupled with age, and talents, and spiritual gifts, it might give him a control in their councils and in the government of the church. This control, and this official rank as the *πρῶτος*, the presiding elder, which was first conceded to him by his fellow-presbyters only *as to a fellow-presbyter*, a *primus inter pares*, he began, in time, to claim as his official prerogative. He first began, by moral means and the influence of accidental circumstances, to be the bishop of the church, and afterwards claimed the office as his right. This assumption of authority gave rise to the gradual distinction between bishop and presbyter. It began early to disturb the relations of equality which at first subsisted between the ministers of the churches, and, in the course of the second and third centuries, resulted in the division of the clergy into two distinct orders, bishops and presbyters."

This comprehensive exposition of the origin of domineering

Episcopacy has the sanction of all the leading writers of ecclesiastical history.

The "King's Book," published in 1543, asserted that there is "no real distinction between bishops and priests," and taught essentially the same doctrine respecting the deacon of the primitive church as is now held by Congregationalists. It further declared, that the Scripture made no mention of any other church officers but these two — priests, or elders, and deacons. — *Hist. Cong. ut sup.* Dwight's *Theology*, serm. 151.

Neander's account of the officers and government of the Gentile churches during the apostolic age is as follows: "It is, therefore, certain that every church was governed by a union of the elders or overseers chosen from among themselves; and we find no individual distinguished above the rest, who presided as a *primus inter pares*, [a chief among equals,] though probably, in the age immediately succeeding the apostolic, of which we have, unfortunately, so few authentic memorials, the practice was introduced of applying to such a one the name of *ἐπίσκοπος*, [bishop, overseer,] by way of distinction." — *Hist. Apost. Chh.* vol. i. pp. 168, 169.

The correctness of Mosheim's account of the humble character and limited authority of the primitive bishop is admitted by Waddington, who says, "The government of a *single person* protected *each society* from internal dissension; the *electiveness* of that governor rendered probable his merit." — *Hist. Chh.* p. 44.

Lord King's representation is, "There was but one bishop, strictly so called, in a church at a time, who was related to his flock as a pastor to his sheep, and a parent to his children." — *Inquiry*, ch. 1, § 5. And again, "There was but one church to a bishop." And this church, he tells us, was "a single congregation." — *Ib.* 2, § 1. "The bishop's diocese exceeded not the bounds of a modern parish, and was the same, as in name so also in thing." — *Ib.* § 2.

Dr. Campbell gives the following account of the bishop's relation to his church in the third century: —

“The bishop, who was properly the pastor, had the charge of no more than one parish, one church, or congregation, the parishioners all assembling in the same place with him for the purposes of public worship, religious instruction, and the solemn commemoration of the death of Christ.” — *Lec. 8*, p. 128.

Gieseler’s account of the apostolic churches is this: “The new churches every where formed themselves on the model of the mother church at Jerusalem. At the head of each were the *elders*, *πρεσβύτεροι*, *ἐπισκοποι*, [elders, bishops,] all officially of equal rank, though, in several instances, a peculiar authority seems to have been conceded to some one individual from personal considerations. After the death of the apostles, and the pupils of the apostles, to whom the general direction of the churches had always been conceded, some one amongst the presbyters of each church was suffered gradually to take the lead in its affairs. In the same irregular way the title of *ἐπισκοπος*, *bishop*, was appropriated to the first presbyter.” — Coleman’s *Antiq.* pp. 101—103.

It is evident, from these witnesses, and the still clearer testimony of the New Testament itself, that in the primitive church there were but two kinds of officers, and two classes of duties corresponding to these. The first was a pastor, or bishop, who was to “take heed to all the flock,” “to feed the church of God,” and to “give himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” For this reason, “a bishop must be apt to teach,” “able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” Says Crowell, “The duties of this office are therefore to teach religion, and to look after the spiritual welfare of the church. The other class of duties is of a temporal nature, requiring not aptness to teach, but eminent piety, honesty, sobriety, good sense, and business habits. These are provided for in the office of deacon, whose duties may be inferred from the word *diaconus*, waiting servant, from the circumstances in which the office originated, and from the requisite qualifications. 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. The wants of churches

are all provided for in these two offices. They have no more occasion for the services of prelates, or diocesan bishops, to govern churches, ordain ministers, and administer discipline, than a civil state has for those of an autocrat, or a dictator."

The church of Christ, as originally constituted, is purely republican. Christ commissioned all his disciples to go forth and proclaim the truth, giving them no authority over others, no preëminence among themselves. Of all kinds of instruction, religious exercises were to be the most free. Every apostle received wisdom from the original source, and acted on his own responsibility in its distribution. Paul, the last accession to the apostolic band, was the most independent and powerful. He boasts that he received his doctrine straightway from God, and not from those "who were apostles before him." He would not allow the council at Jerusalem to cripple his spirit by their decision, but expanded his views beyond Jewish bigotry and local prejudice, under the legitimate influence of that ennobling Christianity which he loved and heroically toiled to spread abroad. In those days, Christians were "a royal priesthood;" all of them being "kings and priests" appointed to offer "a spiritual sacrifice." When, for practical purposes, a church organization was required, the synagogue was adopted as their model, which claimed no power to domineer; and not the temple, whose officers assumed the exercise of high governmental powers. Their elders and deacons were chosen by popular suffrage, and were as much of the people after their election as before. The distinction between clergy and laity was unknown; all were sons of God, upon whom the Holy Ghost in equal measures fell. They were "anointed of God," and "knew all things;" they "needed not that any man should teach them." Christ broke every priestly yoke, and bade men pray as he did, with no intermediate official, nothing between them and the Father of lights; making the whole earth a temple, and each true breathing of the heart acceptable adoration. More than two centuries passed before masters of doctrine arose, who claimed to bind and loose on earth and in

heaven. These were the favored ones, who knew expressly all about "the mind of the Lord," the "successors of the apostles," who, as "the clergy," first made themselves "the church," and ended by setting themselves above the reason and conscience of every individual soul.

Christianity, by its very nature, is independent of every thing terrestrial and human. It has no sacred localities, no stationary shrines. Should Sinai and Calvary, Jerusalem and Rome, Wittenberg and Geneva, disappear from the earth, Christianity would remain unaffected. Least of all should we infer from the Scriptures that such an anomaly could exist as a national church, wherein all the religious organizations sink their independencies into uniform subserviency to a single worldly sovereign and a few semi-political prelates. Christ is the only Master in Christianity, and the entire framework of his administration is spiritual. Attempt to combine with it state patronage or coercion, and you utterly destroy its power. The prime command of divine religion is, "Choose;" that of a state church is, "Who are you, sir, that you should presume to choose?" When God approaches a man, he recognizes his individuality, his independency, and freedom of action. But when man presumes to legislate for his fellow-man in religious things, he arrogates authority which belongs only to God, and degrades the passive victim of his tyrannical control. The instant civil government is employed as a means in Christianity, all its primitive beauty and force are destroyed. For a little while longer, perhaps, it may continue "the be-all and end-all" of Episcopal religion to exalt "the church" above Christianity, the hierarchy above God, ordination above edification; but surrounding multitudes are waking up to juster and more scriptural views, not having yet forgotten the cry of the Waldenses — "All Christians are priests."

John Huss was burned at the stake for asserting, "If he who calls himself the vicar of Jesus Christ imitates the life of Jesus Christ, he is his vicar; but, if he follows an opposite course, he is the messenger of Antichrist." This truth we hold.

We believe that gospel institutions are not formed by a power without, but within. Every man born of the Spirit of God, and obedient to the commands of Christ, has a perfect right to all church privileges; and every such Christian, according to his measure of gifts, is divinely commissioned to be a teacher of the doctrines he has professed. In the language of D'Aubigné, "Where the Spirit is, there is the church; this is the principle of the reform: where the church is, there is the Spirit, is the principle of Rome and Oxford; and it is also, though in a milder form, that of Lutheranism." John Milton had a vivid conception of the republican character of the primitive Christianity, and of its infinite superiority over all state religion. Says he, "That the magistrate should take into his power the stipendiary maintenance of church ministers, as compelled by law, can stand neither with the people's thought nor with Christian liberty, but would suspend the church wholly upon the state, and turn the ministers into state pensioners. For the magistrate to make the church his mere ward, as always in minority; the church, to whom he ought, as a magistrate, 'to bow down his face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of her feet;' her to subject to his political drifts, or conceived opinions, is neither just nor pious; no honor done to the church, but a plain dishonor; and upon her whose head is in heaven, — yea, upon Him who is the only head in effect; and what is most monstrous, a human on a heavenly, a carnal on a spiritual, a political head on an ecclesiastical body; which at length, by such heterogeneal, such incestuous conjunction, transforms her oftentimes into a beast of many heads and many horns." What the Christian church is, has been admirably defined by the same profound thinker and unrivalled author, in his "Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone."

*"The visible church is either universal or particular.*

*"The universal visible church is the whole multitude of those who are called, in every part of the world, and who openly worship God the Father through Christ, in any*



place whatever, either individually or in conjunction with others.

“*A particular church* is a society of persons professing the faith, *united by a special bond of brotherhood*, and so ordered as may best promote the ends of edification and mutual communion of the saints.”

Having thus shown that bishops are not essential to constitute a church, we proceed, secondly, to observe that they never were designed to exercise lordship over equals in Christ. The plan projected by our Lord for planting the kingdom of truth and righteousness in the world is admirably stated by Reinhard in the following extract: “He directed his apostles never to think of striving after civil power, or any other influence than that which could be obtained by exhibiting the truth and setting a virtuous example. Luke xxii. 24—27. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. They were to gain none by promising them earthly advantage, but were ever to inculcate upon their hearers the truth, that virtue must look for its full reward to another world. Matt. x. 37—39. They were not to constitute a secret society, nor operate by secret arts, but to go forth into all the world and make known the truth freely and publicly to all nations. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts i. 8. In so doing they were not merely to enjoin it upon every one to believe their word, but they were to call upon every one to hear their reasons and examine them for themselves. Wherever they found people who advocated the truth, they were to establish institutions for the preservation and extension of a more thorough acquaintance with it. Hence they were to prepare men by education for teaching others, and institute meetings and exercises for the common information and encouragement of all the professors of this pure religion. In their efforts, indeed, they were not to allow themselves to be checked or disturbed by vetoes or magisterial power, (Matt. x. 17—33. John xv. 17, to chap. xvi. 4,) for no earthly ruler has a right to prohibit his subjects from receiving this religion, addressing itself, as it does, to the conscience, or to lay down precepts for directing them in attend-

ing to their moral education and the welfare of their souls. Acts iv. 19, 20. On the other hand, they were not to allow those who wished to become of their number to occasion any discord in society, or, under any pretence whatever, to transgress the several relations to which they had been assigned, (1 Cor. vii. 17—22,) or refuse to give due honor to their rulers, and yield the most willing and punctual obedience to their lawful regulations. Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Pet. ii. 13—17. Tit. iii. 1. They were rather to aim earnestly at transforming all the advocates of the truth into the most diligent, faithful, and useful citizens, by inculcating it upon them, as a general principle, that they were bound to honor the doctrines which they professed, and advance the truth as much as possible, by exhibiting the most upright and dignified conduct in all their relations. Matt. v. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. Phil. i. 27. Col. i. 10. Tit. ii. 5—10. In this way, then, was the truth to conquer of itself. It needed no foreign aid. The nations of the earth would gradually ascertain that it would be for their interests, in every respect, to embrace it and obey it. All those, also, who gave themselves up to the advancement of the Savior's great views, were to expect the protection and assistance of Heaven, which was of far more importance than the favor of the world; for the plan in which Jesus was engaged, was the work of God. John iv. 34, with chap. xvii. It was the object of the Governor of the world, and of the Father of mankind, to bless the whole human family, and give the inhabitants of the earth the highest proof of his infinite love, by carrying this great undertaking into effect.

“Such is the great plan, which, according to historical testimony, Jesus devised for the good of our race, and such are the means which were to be employed for carrying it into complete effect. That it has been misapprehended and misrepresented, is neither his fault nor that of his friends. It has not yet been carried into complete effect, at least to such a degree as its author intended, and as could be wished. With this, however, we have nothing to do. It is sufficient that Jesus

intended it should be ; that this was the object which he had in view." pp. 117, 118.

Now, any form of religious establishment, papal, primateal, or episcopal, we believe calculated to violate these scriptural principles by fostering servile education, training an obsequious priesthood, and rivetting the bonds of degrading tyranny upon the popular mind. We will examine these points in the order named.

In the first place, the existence of episcopal primacy in the church tends to foster a servile education in all its members. In the presence and under the control of national religion, national education will be a political agency mainly, employed to fortify tottering thrones and decayed dynasties, not to promote human greatness and joy in all the practical walks of popular improvement. The despots of Europe discovered some time since that, from the extension of liberal sentiments, and the growing empire of the press, it would be unsafe for them to rely on the old weapons of tyranny as they had been hitherto employed. They knew that standing armies are losing their value ; the sword is growing patriotic rather than oppressive, and the bayonet is inclined to fraternize with the populace, instead of piercing its heart. To secure general control, other influences must be put in operation, of which powers education occupies the front rank. But it is a great mistake to suppose that an educated nation will necessarily in the highest sense be free. Educated slaves abound as well as ignorant ones, and quite as disposed to "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, where thrift may follow fawning ;" indeed, they are generally the most degraded, for there are rugged energies in the ignorant which occasionally rebel against oppression, and perform the work of holier agencies, whereas an educated slave is too abject to rise against dignified despotism. How have Austria, France, and especially Russia, been employed for the last half century ? They have been uncommonly active in establishing institutions and promoting plans for the instruction of their subjects. But what are the nature

and tendency of the lessons imparted to the masses of the people? Not such as are calculated to unfold in each soul the true, the beautiful, and the just, in harmony and holiness, but such as would incline them still to remain the quiet serfs of tyranny. The bold, free characteristics and aspirations of the individual, by this process, are sacrificed, and one mechanical, levelling scheme is pursued, fatal to all manly earnestness, all enthusiasm, all lofty emulation, all courage, and all strength. Our countryman, Horace Mann, not long since went personally to survey this process, and has described its effects. He regrets the incompetency of the Prussian population, and accounts for it as follows:—

“When the children come out from the school, they have little use either for the faculties that have been developed, or for the knowledge that has been acquired. Their resources are not brought into demand; their powers are not roused and strengthened by exercise. Our common phrases, ‘the active duties of life,’ ‘the responsibilities of citizenship,’ ‘the stage, the career of action,’ ‘the obligations to posterity,’ would be strange-sounding words in a Prussian ear. There, government steps in to take care of the subject, almost as much as the subject takes care of his cattle. The subject has no officers to choose, no inquiry into the character or eligibleness of candidates to make, no vote to give. He has no laws to enact or abolish. He has no questions about peace or war, finance, taxes, tariffs, post-office, or internal improvement, to decide or discuss. He is not asked where a road shall be laid, or how a bridge shall be built; although, in the one case, he has to perform the labor, and in the other to supply the materials. His sovereign is born to him; the laws are made for him. In war, his part is not to declare it, or to aim at the end of it, but to fight and be shot in it, and to pay for it. The tax-gatherer tells him how much he is to pay; the ecclesiastical authority plans a church, which he must build; and his spiritual guide, who has been set over him by another, prepares a creed and a confession of faith all ready for his signature. He is directed

alike how he must obey his king and worship his God. Now, although there is a sleeping ocean in the bosom of every child that is born into the world, yet, if no freshening, life-giving breeze ever sweeps across its surface, why should it not repose in dark stagnation forever?"

At the same time he believes the stagnation in Prussia not to be so profound or enduring as it may appear to a superficial observer. He proceeds to remark, —

“A proverb has now obtained currency in Prussia, which explains the whole mystery of the relation between their schools and their life. ‘The school is good, the world is bad.’ The quiescence or torpidity of social life stifles the activity excited in the school-room. Whatever pernicious habits and customs exist in the community, act as antagonistic forces against the moral training of the teacher. The power of the government presses upon the partially-developed faculties of the youth as with a mountain’s weight. Still, in knowledge and in morality, in the intellect and in the conscience, there is an expansive force which no earthly power can overcome. Though rocks and mountains were piled upon it, its imprisoned might will rend them asunder, and heave them from their bases, and achieve for itself a sure deliverance. No one who witnesses that quiet, noiseless development of mind which is now going forward in Prussia, through the agency of its educational institutions, can hesitate to predict that the time is not far distant when the people will assert their right to a participation in their own government. The late king made a vow to his subjects that he would give them a constitution; he survived a quarter of a century to falsify his word, and at last went down to his grave with the promise unredeemed. This was a severer shock to his power than if he had lost half the wealth of his realm. Thousands of his subjects do not hesitate now to declare that fidelity on his part was the only equivalent for loyalty on theirs; and, standing in his mausoleum, amid the costliest splendors of architecture and statuary, — the marble walls around covered with gilded inscriptions in honor of the royal name, —

they interpolate a black line upon his golden epitaph, and say, 'He promised his people a constitution, but violated his royal faith, and died forsworn!'"

Ay, within a few months past, the outraged people have done more and better than that; they have rebelled *en masse*, and won the privileges so long refused. But there are other examples which should give timely warning of similar results against political and spiritual despotism. Look at England, and observe how education there produces little or no other effect than that of substituting a polished for a barbarous slavery. All the great universities are in the hands of the Episcopacy, and no student can enter their halls without first swearing fealty to her Thirty-nine Articles. Oxford and Cambridge are the richest educational establishments in the world, furnished with the choicest spoils of literature and science, and offering to the emulative the accumulated thought of earth's sages and poets, from Homer down to our own day. What is the result? One would suppose that these two universities would produce the most zealous prophets and magnanimous legislators, the wisest leaders of civilization, the bravest tribunes of the people, the most beneficent disciples of Christ. "But," says William Maccall, "the only fruit of so much intellectual wealth, of such varied intellectual stimulus, is slavery, — slavery of the most abject kind. Those who emerge from those famous halls, from those cloisters professedly sacred to religion and philosophy, may be scholars, may be gentlemen, but they are not what is higher, men. They are crammed with Greek and mathematics, armed with the glittering etiquettes which habit can teach the dullest to use with as much dexterity as the shrewdest. But they dare not think, they dare not wander from the beaten path; they are as much chained to custom, and to the paltriest absurdities that custom has hallowed, as the felon is to his galley. Instead of aiding social and political progress, they are its fiercest enemies. Instead of a comprehensive knowledge of the tendencies and wants, and an enlarged and generous sympathy with the fate of

mankind, they display an ignorance of humanity which is equalled only by their indifference to its destiny. They confine their interest entirely to England, and, even in England, their interest is further narrowed to those who hold the same political opinions or are connected with the same ecclesiastical institutions as themselves. I am convinced that the great mass of the clergymen of the church of England know absolutely nothing of the state of feeling and opinion beyond the narrow circle in which they usually move. I say this more in regret than in reproach, and as having a special bearing on my subject. Now, my friends, the slaves that Oxford and Cambridge thus create, have heads and hearts like their neighbors. Apart from their bigotry and prejudice, many of them display the greatest acuteness, the profoundest erudition, the keenest sense of honor, the warmest benevolence. It is an atrocious system which renders them what they are, and dwarfs so deplorably their moral and intellectual stature. Blame them we cannot help occasionally, and in harsh terms, when they stand so obstinately in the way of all human improvement; but they are still more to be pitied than blamed, as having been, from earliest childhood, crushed by a burden of formulas, which have gradually grown to be a portion of themselves, and under which they can only move with a tortoise gait and at a tortoise pace."

The sinister motives which constitute and control the ecclesiastical establishments of England are easily understood. By national education is simply meant the training up proselytes to her church, vassals to her creed; and, if so be their shibboleth be constantly and correctly repeated, as they hold the children's souls in the way of salvation and servitude, all the ends are accomplished about which any real interest is felt. But we have not so learned Christ. We believe that "the just shall live by faith;" not by the Thirty-nine Articles, not by court patronage, not by the favor of mitres, nor by clinging in base subserviency at the hem of bishops' robes.

This leads us to remark, secondly, that the subjugation of the church of Christ to the control of episcopal primacy, requires

the training and agency of an obsequious priesthood. Preachers, in common with all professional men, depend mainly for support upon the good will of others; and, whether those others be few or many, a people or a government, a church or a patron, deacons or lords, there is always a powerful inducement to accommodate truth to vitiated tastes. Against this danger, nothing but the independency of both churches and clergymen can provide a sufficient check. If each congregation is left voluntarily to support such services as they believe to be sincere and edifying, no danger will result; since, however much people in general may love a lie, they are never long disposed to pay for having it taught. But, if men ordinarily betray a disposition to make the truth they preach coincide with the views and wishes of those upon whom their temporal comforts depend, then, in the primatical system, this kind of danger will most certainly be incurred. Subservience to an individual is far more to be deprecated than subservience to a congregation. For this reason, pay received at the hands of a state, or sacred functions held only at the will of a bishop, will be sure to work the most disastrous consequences. Enslaved by the frigidity and formality of an artificial and conventional existence, the sworn parasite of power will be content to move in the petty and monotonous round of a despotic etiquette, squandering his modicum of intellect and God's precious legacy of time on matters all unworthy of a teacher of free and immortal truth. So long as he sits at the table of an earthly patron, or crouches at his feet, with an eye to future preferment, and with all his interests indissolubly linked with "things as they are," right or wrong, he will be expected to gloss over fashionable vices, debase the spirituality of the gospel, preach the divine right of kings and bishops, the virtue of passive obedience, the efficacy of sacraments, and the exclusive pretensions of that priesthood of which he claims to be a member, in spite of his boasted independence of his flock.

The tendency of primatical religion is the same wherever it is allowed to preponderate, the legitimate character of which



is seen most clearly displayed in the chief kingdom of its source. There, according to the highest authority, only such gentlemen as are educated at Oxford and Cambridge, in the dead languages and exact sciences, with a *quantum sufficit* of spirited irregularities, are divinely commissioned to supersede human reason and common sense in religious affairs. These extraordinary men attain their heavenly attributes by the rite of Episcopal ordination; by the sublime privilege of having laid upon their head the hands of some other member of their class, who has been fortunate enough to have been promoted by the prime minister of the day to a vacant see; which ineffable blessing fuses down, by some mysterious agency, all the crude materials which pedantic tutors have crammed into their brains, and converts them into that species of supernal wisdom which is entitled, by its own superiority, to treat all common wisdom and saintship as mere surplusage — infinitely contemptible in the presence of those whom the premier of the British lion, and his jackal, the bishop, have dovetailed into “the regular apostolic succession.” By such means, the soul’s freedom is subverted, rather than sustained; and religion appears before the world as a miserable monopoly of priests, conferring on man a right to dictate to his fellows, instead of inspiring in all alacrity to sympathize with and succor each; treating Christianity as if designed expressly to be an instrument by which the few may awe the many into abject servitude, and not as the lawful property of every human being, the great boon given to make cheerful and happy every immortal mind. It is not strange that reflecting persons look on with disgust, when, by a round of formal prayers and empty rites, attempts are made to propitiate God, and fawning the most abject pervades all ranks of an arbitrarily-graduated priesthood, from the humblest candidate to the highest functionary. It is painful, in this enlightened age, to see those who enjoy the privileges of a (so called) liberal education, and whose knowledge, sympathies, and aspirations, should raise them far above the meagre and contracted region of factious strife and bigoted antagonism, yet

condescend to yield their manly neck to the yoke, and their luminous brow to the brand of a petty and dwarfing thralldom, which the accident of birth or station has created. Jesus Christ never established such dictatorship amongst his primitive disciples, nor do we believe that it is desired, or will long be endured, by the progressive piety of modern times. On the contrary, we believe that few things are regarded with such unqualified abhorrence, by the masses of the people, as the iniquitous influence of this system and its oppressive results.

“A hundred humble pastors starve,  
While one or two, impalaced, mitred, throned,  
And banqueted, burlesque, if not blasphemous,  
The holy penury of the Son of God;  
The fastings, the foot-wanderings, and the preachings,  
Of Christ and his first followers.”

Under this general division of our subject, we are noticing some of the forms of primatical or episcopal religion which violate the simplicity of the original institutions of Christ. We have mentioned two, and it remains to describe a still worse feature, viz., the process by which it rivets the worst bonds upon the popular mind. Many of the best writers in Europe are not insensible to the importance of this subject. Says an able contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, of August, 1820, —

“The ‘alliance of church and state,’ when rightly interpreted, seems to mean merely the alliance of the majority with the majority, in order to keep down the minority — which does not appear either to be a very just or a very necessary measure. And, accordingly, the doctrine of this famous alliance, which was at one time crammed down our throats with so much vigor, and which some persons seem sufficiently disposed to revive at the present moment, has been so generally discredited of late years, that it may fairly be considered as abandoned by all the temperate and enlightened advocates of the establishment. Dr. Paley, for example, has stated unequivocally, that to ‘make of the church an engine or even an ally of the state, serves only to debase the institution;’ and that ‘the single end

we ought to propose, by an ecclesiastical establishment, is the preservation and communication of religious knowledge.' And to the same purpose Mr. Burke, in terms still more direct and decided: 'An alliance,' says he, 'between church and state, in a Christian commonwealth, is, in my opinion, an idle and a fanciful speculation. An alliance is between two things that are in their nature distinct and independent, such as between two sovereign states; but, in a Christian commonwealth, the church and the state are one and the same thing.' To us, indeed, it appears more like a burlesque upon government than any thing else, to say that the only way to secure the excellence of any political institution is to connect it with a corporation of priests, dependent upon it by their interests, and consequently bound, as far as interest is concerned, to support it when it invades the rights of the people as well as when it protects them."

Milton, in his "Reason of Church Government urged against Prelacy," chap. iii., says, with forcible pertinency to this point, —

"When the church, without temporal support, is able to do her great works upon the unforced obedience of man, it argues a divinity about her. But when she thinks to credit and better her spiritual efficacy, and to win herself respect and dread, by strutting in the false vizard of worldly authority, it is evident that God is not there, but that her apostolic virtue is departed from her, and hath left her key-cold; which she perceiving, as in a decayed nature, seeks to the outward fermentations and chafings of worldly help and external flourishes, to fetch, if it be possible, some motion into her extreme parts, or to hatch a counterfeit life with the crafty and artificial heat of jurisdiction. But it is observable, that so long as the church, in true imitation of Christ, can be content to ride upon an ass, carrying herself and her government along in a mean and simple guise, she may be, as he is, a Lion of the tribe of Judah, and, in her humility, all men, with loud hosannas, will confess her greatness. But when, despising the mighty operation of the Spirit

by the weak things of this world, she thinks to make herself bigger and more considerable by using the way of civil force and jurisdiction, as she sits upon this Lion, she changes into an Ass, and instead of hosannas, every man pelts her with stones and dirt." This great and good man knew that whatever is binding upon us as Christians, whatever is essential to a Christian church, must be recorded in the New Testament; if it be not there, the assumption of divine right is false. He knew that the whole fabric of *jure divino* Episcopacy is built upon dubious sophisms derived from the (so called) fathers, instead of the explicit directions of Christ and the apostles; hence his distrust of those corrupters of the middle ages whom in the following manner he has characterized: "Whatever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn from old to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or seaweed, shell or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the fathers." Milton was too much of a republican and sincere Christian, to abandon the Scriptures, and swear allegiance to man on the authority of these exceedingly fallible fathers, whom he calls "a *fog* of witnesses."

The architect of prelatical religion succeeds only by destroying the temples of freedom and revelation. The physician of the soul thus contrives to live by the death of the body. British Christianity has long been petrified by the Gorgon head of frightful worldliness. By the act of supremacy, Henry VIII. became as truly pope in England, as Clement VII. had previously been. He claimed the right to regulate the church as seemed good in his own eyes; and his parliaments sanctioned that claim. The successors of Henry, with the *crown*, inherited also the headship of *the church* of England. At present, the "supreme head" is a gay woman, who "convenes, pro rogues, restrains, regulates and dissolves all synods and ecclesiastical convocations;" for, though there is the formality of an election of these functionaries by the deans and chapters of their respective dioceses, yet this is authorized only by what is called a *cong e d'elire*, or permission to elect,

which is accompanied by a nomination of the person to be elected.

Says Dr. Cheever, "Episcopalianism becomes Popery in essence, when it takes to its bosom the apostolical succession. Its priests assert that every thing is in their hands, that baptism is regeneration, that there is no regeneration without it, and that there is no baptism except *through* a prelatical bishop. If you enter the prison of such a system, it will make you do as it pleases. Its monopoly cannot be broken. You dare not go elsewhere, for salvation is only within its walls. Let its rules be ever so rigid, you are obliged to abide by them; it may tax you to its heart's content, but if there is no salvation out of its ordinances, what are you to do? It may take away all your liberties, but if it holds the key of your salvation, you are a helpless victim, and cannot stir. Once give to the system of Episcopalianism the claims which the apostolical successionists are advancing, and you have a perfect spiritual despotism, quite as remorseless as Popery itself.

"Whether these odious pretensions are rightly attributed to Episcopalians as a body in this country, we do not undertake to decide; but they *are* the pretensions of those who love the preëminence, and who possess it, to a degree, in their conventions, and in their metropolitan royalties. And those who do not side with these dignitaries, will nevertheless have to bear the reproach of such pretensions, unless they plainly disavow and resist them, and are willing to make some effort to reform their church of them. Whatever persons in the church do not, so far as they may be able, oppose these injurious maxims and practices, they are themselves partakers in the ungodliness of that zeal which was marked of the apostle John in the case of Diotrephes, who loveth the preëminence and casteth us out of the church."

The church of Rome fulminates her thunders clear and loud, — every heretic accursed!

The Episcopacy, which is only Papacy diluted, with subdued arrogance imitates the same thunders. There is no church but

our church ; no true ministry, nor any regular salvation, out of it ! Even in this country, where all sects are indebted to the Puritans in general, and to Roger Williams in particular, for religious liberty, this small sect swells into a puny resemblance to their mother across the sea, and talks of *dissenters* with ill-disguised contempt. Can any thing be more absurd ? The church of England, and her offshoot in this country, have no better claim to be denominated *Protestant* than the “dissenting bodies,” whom they charitably place beyond the pale of Christianity. It was not an act of the British church, by any means, that first caused the application of the term *Protestants* to the supporters of the reformation. The term arose from the six Lutheran princes, at the diet of Spire, in Bavaria, in 1529, who solemnly *protested* against a decree of Ferdinand of Austria, and other Popish princes, abridging their religious rights. Hence the name of *Protestants* was first applied to the followers of Luther. But it was not confined to them. “It soon after included the Calvinists, and has now of a long time been applied generally to the Christian sects, of whatever denomination, and in whatever country they may be found, which have separated from the see of Rome.”

In the gospel, divine worship is a truth of fact, of practice, and of sentiment, every where prescribed, but no where restricted ; it remains free as to its forms, its language, and its place. The New Testament does not arrogantly dogmatize, but lovingly instruct ; does not enumerate decretals to excite strife, nor rouse enmities by coercing conviction ; it every where inculcates one firm, uniform, consolatory, and saving faith, a sufficient guide and support in life and death, which faith is not the arbitrary result of a human creed, but the legitimate fruit of free investigation of the inspired word. Dictating to man how he shall worship God, is dictating to God how he shall be worshipped — prescribing what kind of prayer and praise he shall receive. Unfortunately quite too much of this is done.

The oppression which the people suffer under compulsory

bishoprics is twofold — pecuniary and spiritual. We now are speaking of the first of these, and the iniquitous means by which it is maintained. To the archbishop of Canterbury a yearly revenue is allowed of £19,182, or \$85,168; and to the archbishop of York, £12,629, or \$56,072: making a sum total of *one hundred and forty-one thousand two hundred and forty dollars* annually, for two ornamental dignitaries of the only scriptural church! Beside these, there are some five and twenty bishops, the direct successors of the apostles, and who receive their authority as well as dignity from Him who had not where to lay his head, and to support whom, the people must pay annually no less than *five hundred and seventy thousand four hundred and fifty-five dollars*. The amount appropriated yearly to the twenty-eight deans and chapters is *one million two hundred and sixty-two thousand and thirty dollars*; to the support of other ecclesiastical ranks in the establishment, *sixteen and a half millions of dollars*; making the gross annual expenditure, including the branches in Ireland and Wales, *more than TWENTY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS*, which the industrious classes have to pay from their own pockets to keep themselves in bonds. The English Episcopal church is indeed, as they modestly call themselves, "*the Wonder of Christendom*," but whom Lord Chatham more justly characterized as having "a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy."

The chief means of raising this enormous revenue is by cheating the popular mind with the idea that bishops are sacred personages invested with all but divine authority. The word *apostle* is prominent in the Bible, and is most sacred in its associations, but the general masses of the people have not learned the simple fact, that it only means *sent*, and is never a term signifying office, except when applied to *the original twelve*, and to *Paul*, who was also called and sent by our Lord personally, though after his ascension. "This is evident from the manner in which the word is used in 2 Cor. viii. 23 — 'or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers [apostles] of

the churches, and the glory of Christ'; and in Phil. ii. 25— 'Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, [apostle.]' The apostles, therefore, neither had, nor could have, any successors in office, since each must be appointed by our Lord personally; their apostleship ceased with their lives, and contained in it no warrant for appointing nor for ordaining successors, nor made any provision for transmitting or perpetuating the apostolic office. They were not officers *in*, or *of*, any church; they do not in their official epistles style themselves *the* apostles or bishops of any church, or churches, or diocese, nor 'Right Reverend Father in God,' but simply 'apostle of Jesus Christ,' and 'servant of Jesus Christ.' They never appoint any one to office, nor interfere with the internal affairs of any church, but simply assert their right to declare the infallible will of Christ, as his inspired messengers, requiring obedience of faith from all in every age, whether bishops, deacons, or private Christians." The justness of the above statement, quoted from Mr. Crowell, is sustained by what the most intelligent member of the Episcopal hierarchy, Bishop Whately, has affirmed in the following words: "Successors in the apostolic office the apostles have none. As *witnesses* of the resurrection, as *dispensers* of miraculous gifts, as *inspired oracles* of divine revelation, they have no successors. But as *members*, as *ministers*, as *governors*, of Christian communities, their successors are the regularly admitted members, the lawfully ordained ministers, the regular and recognized governors of a regularly subsisting Christian church." This is putting the matter on the true ground of scriptural equality among the disciples of Christ—a position very unlike that which in church and state establishments is almost universally assumed. If it were necessary to say any thing more respecting the true character and appropriate functions of bishops, we have only to add what Mosheim says, vol. i. p. 85: "Whoever supposes that the bishops of the first and golden age of the church corresponded with the bishops of the following centuries, must blend and confound



characters that are very different. For in this century and the next, a bishop had charge of a *single* church, which might ordinarily be contained in a private house; nor was he its *lord*, but was in reality its *minister* or *servant*; he instructed the people, conducted all parts of public worship, and attended on the sick and the necessitous in person; and what he was unable thus to perform, he committed to the care of the presbyters, (elders,) but without the power to ordain or determine any thing, except with the concurrence of the presbyters and the brotherhood."

Another means by which Episcopal hierarchs win and maintain authority over the masses is by imposing upon them bigoted and dwarfing creeds. The Bible is the freest and most ennobling book ever written, heaven wide from those pinching compendiums which ecclesiastical craft has invented to abridge the natural prerogatives of the soul, and mould it into subserviency to their selfish schemes. It is most deplorable to observe how long and how sadly our holy Christianity has been deformed, degraded, and disgraced, by being subordinated to that remorseless lust of power, and insatiate thirst for gain, which labors toward the intralment of mankind, rather than to enlighten and set them free. Who strives to dim the glare of outward distinction, and disabuse the world of those prejudices which caste and rank have created? Shall we never estimate man above his wardrobe or his title, nor understand that to be a Christian is to be a philanthropist; that, in fact, the very essence of Christianity shows itself in a consecration to the welfare of all mankind?

The degrading influence we deprecate spreads itself through all gradations of society where it is found, from the highest to the lowest. In the House of Lords, Lord King one day inquired of Bishop Horsley what was the meaning of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy." "My lord," replied the bishop, "orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is another man's doxy." This is the language of a theological slave; but to the man who in a Christian spirit really respects human nature,

every other opinion is as orthodox as his own, however much they may differ. Like the engineer, who imagined all rivers to have been created exclusively for the purpose of feeding canals, so these bishops act on the principle that the ultimate object of revealed truth is, to facilitate the success of their particular system — to invest them with artificial sanctions, without which they would find it difficult to play their part, and to dispose dupes to unlimited submission, which they account the highest style of personal and social virtue. Hence all the force of religious artifice is employed to bolster up their indolent dignity, and compel the people, out of their hard earnings, to pay the expense without complaint. This scheme is not original, though it is certainly very oppressive. The chief priests and Pharisees of a former church were not less positive, certainly not more puerile in their assertions of self-importance, than these; and the world knows both their wrong estimate of themselves and their despotic rule over others. True, there was not the slightest flaw in the chain of their succession, and yet we do not find them commended for having taken away from the people “the key of knowledge.” The nations, therefore, are beginning to think that the human understanding and heart were given for some higher purpose than to be made blind tools in the hands of such a regularly ordained and apostolical clergy. This kind of popular apprehension is quickened, among other means, by frequently seeing inserted in the public prints that a living is or will be vacant; inviting special notice to the fact that the said living is in a fine sporting country — that the present incumbent is quite old, and rather given to be apoplectic. But the most notorious and exasperating fact is, that where the seats of the squirearchy most thickly stud the land, where established churches are most numerous, and clerical magistrates most abound, there, usually, ignorance and demoralization are most marked; and there the zeal of pious and patriotic dissenters is most opposed. The same influence which produces the evil, prevents the good; and the consequences of aristocratic vices, fortified by Episcopal intol-

erance, are permitted to darken the fairest auspices of human progress. It is not in God or man much longer to allow this tyranny to subsist.

We have shown that bishops are not essential to constitute a church, and were never designed to exercise lordship over equals in Christ : it remains to state that, —

Thirdly, they are no longer needed to oppress the sacred brotherhood. Our preceding remarks relate chiefly to the tyranny of Episcopacy, as it is felt by the people in common ; but we now refer to the injustice inflicted by this system on Christians of every name in particular. There are a good many persons who are disposed to call their souls their own, and to judge, in relation to their spiritual welfare, for themselves. The fundamental principle with them is, that the religion of Christ ought to be left to make its way among mankind in the greatest possible simplicity, by its own truth and excellence, through the labors of pious, voluntary, and free advocates, presided over by its great Author alone. They think that true religion cannot, without fatal injury to the primitive purity of a “kingdom not of this world,” be subordinated to the political arrangements of monarchs and statesmen, and blended inseparably with secular interests and clerical intrigues, the most ambitious and degrading passions. When religious authority is vested in an individual, it assumes the papal, primatical, or episcopal form, identical in character, and in influence every where the same. Whether it be wedded to sceptres and coronets, an engine acted on by state corruptions to crush struggling subjects, or develop its arrogance through domineering bishops and secret conclaves in a country where the sanctions of legalized oppression have been wrested from its greedy grasp, the fervor of high church aspirations after absolute dictation in theological affairs, should tend constantly to intensify the detestation of freemen towards hierarchies of all forms and ecclesiastical combinations of every name. No religious organizations in this country, or any other, stand strictly on apostolic ground, except those whose principles, ordinances, and

polity are the same as those of the primitive churches. These only are in harmony at once with the principles of Christianity; and the genius of all institutions which adorn, as well as fortify, a republic, are most favorable to the cultivation of personal virtues, and possess the only real claim on the regard of republicans. "Where one particular priesthood has rank in the state, others are not free; and where they all have, the people are not free. So far as the ceremonies of one particular faith are connected with filling any particular occupation, entering into the relations, or enjoying any of the advantages, of civil life, there is not religious liberty. It is a fallacious distinction which has sometimes been drawn, that a state may patronize, though it should not punish. A government cannot patronize one particular religion without punishing others. A state has no wealth but the people's wealth; if it pay some, it impoverishes others. A state is no fountain of honor. If it declare one class free, it thereby declares others slaves. If it declares some noble, it thereby declares others ignoble. Whenever bestowed with partiality, its generosity is injustice, and its favor is oppression."

It has ever been the ambition of false religions to employ solemn and hypocritical attempts to drain the multitude for the benefit of priestly aristocracies and the defence of regal wrongs. The most flagrant instance of this feudal barbarity now extant flourishes around the head-quarters of Episcopacy in England. There, as Robert Hall has said, "in theory, the several orders of the state are a check on each other; but corruption has oiled the wheels of that machinery, harmonized its motions, and enabled it to bear, with united pressure, on the happiness of the people." But such a state of things cannot be long endured. For, as the same distinguished advocate of English freedom remarks, "to invest idleness and dissipation with the privileges of laborious piety is an impracticable attempt. For by a constitution more ancient than that of any priesthood, superior degrees of sanctity and of exertion will gain superior esteem as their natural reward. We must not wonder to find the public forget the reverence due to the sacred

profession, when its members forget the spirit and neglect the duties on which that reverence was founded. The natural equity of mankind will not suffer the monopoly of contradictory goods. If the people are expected to reverence an order, it must be from the consciousness of benefits received. If the clergy claim authority, it must be accompanied with a solicitude for the spiritual interest of their flocks, and labor sustained. To enjoy at once both honor and ease never fell to the share of any profession. If the clergy neglect their charge, if they conform to the spirit of the world, and engage with eagerness in the pursuits of ambition or of pleasure, it will be impossible for any human policy to preserve them from sinking in the public esteem."

It is pitiable indeed to see a bench of bishops conspiring with tyrannical lords of the secular orders against the popular desire for liberty already too strong to be overcome, and which is constantly on the increase. How vain and futile the effort, in this nineteenth century, to interpose bayonets before the progress of free principles,—the prerogatives of supercilious rank and sanctimonious presumption, as barriers in that path which conducts to the wider area and loftier privileges in reserve for mankind! "The pope eats the grain, we the straw," said Luther. But millions of Christians are, even in this enlightened age, worse conditioned. They are obliged to assist in supporting a pompous show of religion, which they abhor, and yet, out of the scanty resources that remain, provide preaching more genial to honest piety and the word of God. Milton told splendid "hirelings," long ago, that "forced consecrations out of another man's estate are no better than forced vows, hateful to God, who 'loves a cheerful giver;' but much more hateful wrung out of men's purses to maintain a disapproved ministry against their consciences."

It is manifest, that God never purposed to bind redemption to forms, fixed and inviolable; it is a divine kingdom that "cometh not with observation," but is established "within us," that it may pass freely from heart to heart, through all ranks and

degrees of mankind. By this independence of forms, Christianity admits the poorest and most humble to rites that soothe and doctrines that save without money and without price. The religion of Israel, which was ceremonial and transient, could not exist without the temple, with its treasures, its vessels of brass, of silver and gold; hence, when the sacred vessels employed in the service were carried away to Babylon, the whole was removed. But pure religion borrows nothing from worldly wealth and power; the cross of wood is her only instrument given to conquer the world. Devout worshippers of gowns and bands, and the whole round of ecclesiastical mummery, are only attempting to revive what eighteen hundred years ago became obsolete. Great and glorious improvements are taking place in every other department of life; and yet what do we see in the most important of all? Nations are calling for the word of life, with their myriads of immortal souls in danger of eternal death, which urgent demands must be set aside till bigots shall terminate their transcendental controversies on tapers, bowings, and surplices,—till they shall have decided whether the salvation of the world depends upon their having a stone altar instead of a wooden one, and when they stand up to read a prayer, whether they shall face the east or west. The directions of the rubric are in debate, and the bishop of Exeter, for one among the spiritual lords, insists upon their observance in every church throughout his diocese, whatever may be the opposition of the laity assembled in town and parish meetings. All agitation in favor of greater freedom of thought and speech is suppressed with a zeal exceeded only by the gross and brutal outrages which are frequently committed on the most sacred feelings of humanity. For instance, a short time since, in London, the body of a child was brought by its parents to the churchyard, that its remains might rest by the side of its brother or sister; but the weeping parents were rudely repulsed from the gate, because the little infant had not been sprinkled in “the regular apostolic succession.” A dissenting preacher is not allowed to bury in consecrated ground.

A line of demarcation is set up among the dead, as every where among the living. His father may have been buried there if he was a member of the church, but he is not permitted to lie by his parent's side ; at least, with his own chosen minister to consign him to the grave and pray over his body. It is this same bigoted feeling that has excluded the republican Cromwell's statue from the new palace of legislation, and still more recently has denied the statue of John Wesley a place in Westminster Abbey. It is the more remarkable that the latter should be denied Christian honors, since he lived and died in the establishment.

As the great mother gives the word beyond the sea, her loyal children, with apish pretensions to infallibility, repeat the arrogance among ourselves. But the end draws nigh. Primal religion is death-struck throughout the world, and no ostentatious forms can vivify it with spiritual life, nor can fine dresses long hide its putrescence. The decree of the Omnipotent has gone forth, that the will of one or a few shall no longer break down the will, the heart, and conscience of the many. The religion that will not educate and bless the multitudes of earth is doomed speedily to be extirpated by them. Episcopacy has always and every where been as tyrannical as the spirit of the age would permit ; therefore is it to be deprecated as anti-Christian and anti-republican. It tends to subvert all true religious liberty, and all political freedom. It began by removing the checks and guards of a popular government against the exercise of arbitrary power. It invested the bishops with prerogatives, which can never be safely intrusted to any man or body of men. The subsequent history of this church abundantly confirms the position that popular rights can never be confided to the hands of the clergy without detriment. Says Arnold, one of the most magnanimous and enlightened of the English Episcopacy, "To revive Christ's church is to expel the Antichrist of the priesthood, which, as it was foretold of him, *as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,* and to restore its disfranchised

members, the laity, to the discharge of their proper duties in it, and to the consciousness of their paramount importance."

Horne Tooke, quoting from Christ's words to Nicodemus, said, "Truth is that which a man troweth." That which another man thinks is as true to him as what I think is true to me. This right and duty, resting on every rational creature to examine and decide for himself, was the first lesson inculcated by Christ, and the last privilege which selfish bishops are disposed to grant. The patrons of ceremonialism have too much mercenary interest in their hollow rites willingly to give them up, though they are known to constitute almost invincible obstacles to the inward spiritual life. The absurdities of the gloomiest superstition are attempted to be modified in our day, not for the better, but the worse. It is not enough that the world for centuries should have derived its principal illumination from wax lights, fixed on iron spikes, before pictures; while its most substantial nutriment for the soul was derived from the sacrifice of the mass; not as the Neo-Catholics refine and explain it, but such as it is defined by the council of Trent—to sacrifice the Lord by *manducation*—to eat and drink the Lord God himself; or, according to the terms of the council, in "his flesh, blood, soul, and divinity." The happy period has arrived when high Episcopacy, insolent and insipid, reviving the faith of the middle ages in a modern dress, would impose on us the carcass of defunct Catholicity without a particle of its soul, wax tapers lighted up, not as an act of worship to the virgin, but to gleam on moral as well as political falsehoods designed to confuse the vision and enchain the understandings of mankind.

Spiritual truth is moral force, and thought, as moral force, is spiritual truth in action, and adoration; though that action is most often revolution, still we had better have anarchy than stupidity—the heavings of the ocean rather than its stagnation. A great human or divine reality, in whatever garb it appears, is always better than a great pretence deceiving all, itself the most deceived. What the world most



needs is truth that is simple and energetic, infinitely nobler than truth ceremonial and sectarian. Christianity is that truth, the sublime ideal that Christ conceived and nurtured in the profundity of his breast, to be breathed abroad freely on the aching brows and sorrowing hearts of all mankind.

Coleman, in his "Primitive Church," sums up this matter as follows : —

" Thus, as we have seen, ecclesiastical history introduces first to our notice single independent churches ; then, churches having several dependent branches ; then, diocesan churches ; then, metropolitan or provincial churches ; and then, national churches attempered to the civil power. In the end, we behold two great divisions of ecclesiastical empire, the Eastern and the Western, now darkly intriguing, now fearfully struggling with each other for the mastery, until at last the doctrine of the *unity* of the church is consummated in the sovereignty of the pope of Rome, who alone sits enthroned in power, claiming to be the head of the church on earth. The government of the church was at first a democracy, allowing to all its constituents the most enlarged freedom of a voluntary religious association. It became an absolute and iron despotism. The gradations of ecclesiastical organization through which it passed were, from congregational to parochial — parochial to diocesan — diocesan to metropolitan — metropolitan to patriarchal — patriarchal to papal.

" The corruptions and abominations of the church, through that long night of darkness which succeeded the triumph of the pope of Rome, were inexpressibly horrible. The record of them may more fitly lie shrouded in a dead language, than be disclosed to the light in the living speech of men. The successors of St. Peter, as they call themselves, were frequently nominated to the chair of ' his holiness ' by women of infamous and abandoned lives. Not a few of them were shamefully immoral ; and some, monsters of wickedness. Several were heretics, and others were deposed as usurpers. And yet this church of Rome, ' with such ministers, and so ap-

pointed, — a church corrupt in every part and every particular, individually and collectively, in doctrine, in discipline, in practice,' — this church, prelacy recognizes as the only representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the period now under consideration, invested with all his authority, and exercising divine powers on earth! She boasts her ordinances, her sacraments, transmitted, for a thousand years, unimpaired and uncontaminated, through such hands! High church Episcopacy proudly draws her own apostolical succession through this pit of pollution, and then the followers of Christ, who care not to receive such grace from such hands, she calmly delivers over to God's 'uncovenanted mercies'! Nay, more, multitudes of that communion are now engaged in the strange work of 'unprotestantizing the churches' which have washed themselves from these defilements. The strife is with a proud array of talents, of learning, and of episcopal power, to bury all spiritual religion again in the grave of forms, to shroud the light of truth in the gloom of Popish tradition, and to sink the church of God once more into that abyss of deep and dreadful darkness from which she emerged at the dawn of the reformation. In the beautiful and expressive language of Milton, their strife is to 'reinvolve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness where we shall never more see the sun of truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the bird of morning sing.' — pp. 312, 313.

Yes, humanity shall behold a fairer morn, a clearer sun, and listen to more enrapturing melody, than has yet been enjoyed. The minions of power and the slaves of religion may move and combine, according to their fantasy, the grains of their glittering but worthless sand on the bank where truth and progress roll their billows along; but the hour of flood tide comes, and nothing can retard or avert its overwhelming power. Nothing can arrest popular thought now in full revolt against spiritual as well as political despotism, and marching to certain victory over every form of wrong. To demand liberty as a Christian is to demand liberty as a man. Luther, whether he designed it or

not, led the way direct to Munser. This point did not escape Bossuet. Said he, "Luther, in affirming that the Christian was not subject to any man, nourished the spirit of independence in the people, and gave to their leaders dangerous views." Luther, however, was a very imperfect reformer, since he admitted in religion, but rejected in civil policy, the right to resist tyranny. He fought against the pope for a point of doctrine, but left in the hands of kings and sub-pontiffs the power to strangle all belief. What would ecclesiastical domination have accomplished long before this, had it not been for the principles of brotherhood and spiritual freedom contended and bled for, not by Catholics, Lutherans, nor the self-styled Protestants, but by Waldenses, Hussites, Anabaptists, Moravians, and other great defenders of the rights of conscience in recent times? But a more glorious advancement is before us, and it must speedily come; "another and greater reformation, the more complete for its delay. Not even the church can render itself permanently invulnerable to public opinion. The strength which it resists grows yet more formidable by that resistance. At last the voice of truth must be heard, and the light of knowledge must be admitted. At noonday, in the height of summer, it is silent, cold, and dark, in the cloisters of a cathedral. But the thunder resounds along its vaulted roofs, teaching them strange echoes; and, in the glare of the lightning that flashes through its aisles, the very stones seem to move, and the monumental dead to be stirred, like a slumbering world aroused to the necessity of change, revival, and reformation. The stroke of heaven's lightning spares neither tower, nor spire, nor gilded ball, nor the very cross itself. It unroofs the church, and lets in the free air and sight of the blue sky. Institutions no more than buildings are made for eternity. They only prolong themselves by improvement and renovation; nature alone is everlasting. Truth, justice, right, imbodyed in opinion, are nature's thunder and lightning; and, when they shatter institutions, as elemental powers the material building, it is that from the ruins humanity may raise a purer and nobler shrine, wor-

thier of that great Spirit whose temple is the universe, whose altar the human heart, his best worship the activity of beneficence, and the only uniformity he requires—the oneness of brotherhood in all mankind.”

If we are to have freedom of conscience in full extent, and a religion emanating from Christ and harmonious with the republican institutions projected eighteen centuries ago, and, by a merciful Providence, now begun to be realized in the world, then must the hierarchical element be discarded by all, that the enfranchised nations may joyfully verify to themselves that, under God, the best security of freedom, civil and religious, is a *church without a bishop*, not less than a *state without a king*.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHURCH WITHOUT A PRIEST.

PRIESTCRAFT is the product of every age, the defender of every bigoted creed, the chief foe to Christianity, and greatest curse to mankind. These are the general points which, in this discussion, it will be our purpose to elucidate.

In the first place, priestcraft is the product of every age. The makers and patrons of consecrated silver shrines have ever deprecated the innovation of free principles, such as Paul diffused, summoning local prejudice and partisan bigotry to the defence of their established prerogatives, with the mercenary plea that by this craft they have their wealth. This is peculiar to no clime, limited to no sect, but is indigenious to our fallen nature in every place and association. As before Menes the Egyptians precipitated a young virgin into the Nile, in sacrifice to a superstitious creed, so, under the emperors and kings of later times, and in league with civil power of every degree, priestly domination, under all varieties of artificial forms,

pagan ceremonies, and unscriptural rites, has been sanguinary without exception, and inimical to all the best interests of mankind. The sacerdotal corporations who thus tyrannize over the masses betray their intrinsic infamy by the fact that, while they willingly lend a mercenary support to political oppression, they do not seem to regard as a divine thing the worship they impose, and by which they most of all desire to aggrandize themselves. Hence the greatest evils have been inflicted upon humanity in the name of religion. The *auto da fe* has taken the place of human sacrifices, and a new monopoly, embracing almost every source of knowledge and enjoyment, has, for many centuries, plunged the nations in ignorance and despair. Because priestly oppression is oftener made the rule than the exception, the attempt to break this accursed yoke demands the greatest efforts, and involves the most formidable perils; but the auspicious hour has at length arrived when, in the popular estimation, no treasure of gold or blood can exceed the value of that boon Heaven designed for all — freedom to worship God.

Any system that places human intermediaries between the individual believer and his Creator, is in direct conflict with man's rights and the law of Christ. Such obstructions, rather than aids, to the welfare of our race do exist, and it is easy to trace their origin and detect their motives. Says Ranke, "Among the heathens, sacerdotal offices were conferred in like manner with those of civil life. The Jews set apart a particular tribe for the duties of the priesthood; but Christianity was distinguished from both these by the fact that a certain class of men, freely choosing the sacred profession, consecrated by the imposition of hands, and withdrawn from worldly cares and pursuits, is solemnly devoted "to things spiritual and divine." The church was at first governed in accordance with republican forms; but these disappeared as the new belief rose in preëminence, and the clergy gradually assumed a position entirely distinct from that of the laity." After truth, emanating from the manger and the rural simplicity of Judea, strug-

gled through centuries to make the nations free, and, in the strife with craft and power, became but the more intralled, the ancient depth of degradation was again nearly attained, when the pope resolved to demolish the basilica of St. Peter, the metropolitan church of Christendom, every portion of which was crowded with hallowed monuments which had received the veneration of ages, and erected a temple, planned after those of pagan antiquity, on its site.

To represent the priest as the sole and immediate vicegerent of Heaven, clothed with authority the most divine, and consecrated with a sanctity the most pure, no imposition is reckoned too gross, and no fable too absurd. The undeviating aim is to gain power over the credulous, ignorant, and superstitious, of all times, as we may infer from the ridiculous claims of apostolical succession and other ecclesiastical fooleries propounded in our own day. If men calling themselves Christians, and Christian ministers, attempt, as every body knows is done, to concoct a new infallibility, and dig up from the consecrated churchyard of defunct absurdities a revolting system, which they strive to fasten on the free minds of the nineteenth century, what must have been the amount of deception and spiritual tyranny when priests had an unquestioned recognition as the messengers of God, were the sole depositaries of science, the uncontrolled conservators and communicators of knowledge to the world? We live at a period when "the solemn and plaintive tones of the ancient church, once heard amid the pangs of martyrdom, or resounding as soft echoes, wakening the solitudes of the deserts of Syria, Arabia, and Upper Egypt, —the very same tones, and the same testimony, at once for great truths and for great errors too, for eternal verities, and for futile superstitions, are now, and after so long a silence, breaking from the cloisters of Oxford," and other haunts of corrupted truth, to subvert, if possible, pure and simple Christianity every where.

This passion for spiritual power is as common and intense in modern sects as it was in the hierarchies of an earlier type.

Its means differ, but the end in view is always the same — to establish a sovereign control over the faith of mankind, by assailing the timid with threats, and the credulous with arrogant assertions. Free and independent minds it would seduce with fawning, or coerce with invective ; indifferent as to the process used, so that the fabric of superstition may be reared with all its crushing weight on the brain and soul of mankind.

Since the reformation, so called, there has been as much spiritual despotism and spiritual slavery, as abject submission to priestly rule, as ever there was before. This has followed because that reformation, while it pruned off some of the branches of the deadly Upas, yet left its main root of vigor and source of all its poison unscathed. Luther himself was too much of a priest to the last, and therefore a great deal of imperfection depreciated the work he performed. Natural religion is not adequate to meet and satisfy our higher wants, though it imparts many noble influences through those voices which from the stars of heaven and the flowers of earth speak to the soul, ever tending to raise it above a low and sordid system of action, towards virtue and sacred love, as the blossom of our nature, and its highest development. Christianity is therefore sent by our heavenly Father freely to bestow every assistance we can need ; truth, mercy and love not to be interfered with by those who pollute what they touch, and render the purest agency subservient to their own sordid purposes by the perverted modes of its application they are most ambitious to employ. We do not always find clerical functionaries advocating the dearest interests of humanity, ample freedom, civil and religious ; freedom of speech, thought, and action, against arrogance and despotism of every kind. On the contrary, beyond the sea and in our own country, we too often find dissenting intolerance coalescing with episcopal bigotry, while Christianity, like its divine Founder, between the two thieves is crucified.

Such religionists, the disgrace of their profession, are aptly described by Robert Hall, in his "Antinomianism Unmasked."

In their own estimation they are “ a privileged class, who dwell in a secluded region of unshaken security and lawless liberty, while the rest of the Christian world are the vassals of legal bondage, toiling in darkness and in chains. Hence, whatever diversity of character they may display in other respects, a haughty and bitter disdain of every other class of professors is a universal feature. Contempt or hatred of the most devout and enlightened Christians out of their own pale, seems one of the most essential elements of their being ; nor were the ancient Pharisees ever more notorious for ‘ trusting in themselves that they were righteous, and despising others.’ ”

Professor Park, of the Theological Seminary at Andover, has described the dictatorial spirit of arid dogmatists, and the impotency of their rage in the present age, by the following appropriate instance and illustration : “ The Alexandrian fathers, Clement, Origen, and Athanasius placed a punctuation mark after the word *ἐν* in the third verse of the first chapter of John’s Gospel. Chrysostom was alarmed at this punctuation, and denounced it as a heresy. Epiphanius declared it blasphemous, and the sin against the Holy Ghost ; and this commotion on account of a single dot contributed to delay for years the perilous work of punctuating the sacred page. The like hostility to free thought bound the energies of the schoolmen down to the most profitless inquiries. Not daring to rise up and labor in the sunshine, they burrowed in darkness, and wasted on puerile conceits the power that was meant for discovery and progress. This substitution of polemic rancor for fraternal interest has driven the mind of others to an extreme of error, which they did not themselves anticipate. As the child, so the man, and as every man, so the theologian, is apt to do right if you convince him that he is expected to do so, and is apt to do wrong if you assure his neighbors that he is past recovery. He is won to truth and repulsed into error. Arminius, if he had been kindly reasoned with, instead of being rudely denounced, had never pressed his corruptions so far ; and the history of many pitiable writers is this — first, they inquired



with honest intent ; secondly, they were called heretics ; lastly, they became heretics. This domineering spirit of ecclesiastics has incited other minds to revolution against authority. There are some spirits who will think for themselves. You might as well chain the Hellespont as them. You may stand at the portal with a pointed bayonet, they will come out and do what they list. When the bull of the pope has fallen on such a mind, and the edict of the bishop has oppressed it, and the Presbyterian book of discipline has held it down too closely, this mind has stirred under its load, and has struggled against the walls that confined it, pressing against them like lava against the sides of *Ætna*, and at last has heaved, and poured itself out of the rent crater, and scattered books of discipline to the four winds, and taught the aspirants for mental sway that what God has made elastic, and expansive, and inflammable, is not to be compressed and stifled.”

That priestcraft is endeavoring to gain a foothold in this free land is evident from notorious facts. For instance, on July 2, 1843, a young man was ordained by Bishop Onderdonk of New York, who openly avowed his agreement essentially with the church of Rome. 1. “He did not see any thing to prevent or forbid” his having recourse to the ministry of Rome, if denied admission to the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal church in this country. 2. “He did not deem the differences between them [the Protestant Episcopal Church] and the church of Rome to be such as embraced any points of faith.” 3. “He was not prepared to pronounce the doctrine of transubstantiation an absurd or impossible doctrine.” 4. “He does not object to the Romish doctrine of purgatory, as defined by the council of Trent.” \* \* 5. “He was not prepared to say whether she [the Romish church] or the Anglican church were the more pure.” 6. “He regarded the denial of the cup to the laity [in the administration of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper] as a mere matter of discipline.” \* \* 7. “He believes that the reformation from the church of Rome was an unjustifiable act, and followed by many grievous and lamentable results.”

8. "He was not disposed to fault the church of Rome for using Apocryphal books; nor was he prepared to say that the Holy Spirit did not speak by these books Apocryphal."

9. "He considered the promise of conformity to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church as not embracing the Thirty-nine Articles in any *close* and *rigid construction* of them, but regarded them only as affording a sort of general basis of concord — as those which none subscribed except with certain mental reservations and private exceptions; and that this was what he regarded as Bishop White's view." He further declared his conviction of the lawfulness of the invocation of saints; thought the souls in purgatory might be benefited by our prayers; received the creed of Pope Pius IV., so far as it was a repetition of the decrees of the council of Trent, which decrees he could receive, the damnatory clauses only excepted, &c., &c. See "A Statement of Facts in Relation to the recent Ordination in St. Stephen's Church, New York, by Drs. Smith and Anthon, 1843."

Of the overbearing nature of hierarchies, under the forms of papacy and English prelacy, we have said enough in the preceding chapters. The above statement is abundantly sufficient to show that, if it were possible, we should soon have the same oppressive absurdities established here. There is another class of Christians to whom we shall refer in this connection, and with profound respect. The Methodist Episcopal Church is exceedingly active, and doing a great amount of good; but we think they would do much more, if they were governed by a more primitive ecclesiastical polity. Punchard, in his work on "Congregationalism," speaks of this as follows:—

"1. 'The government of this church is *strictly* Episcopal.' So says one of its leading members. Another says, 'It is a *moderate* Episcopacy.'

"Like the Protestant Episcopal Church, it asserts that there should be *three orders in the ministry* — bishops, elders, and deacons; and its book of discipline, contains the substance of the form and manner of making and ordaining these officers,

which is found in the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal church. Their bishops, however, claim not the exclusive right to ordain, and may themselves be ordained by presbyters. See 'Discipline Methodist Episcopal Church,' chap. i. § 4; chap. iv. § 1, 2, 3. They are regarded as superior to elders in *office* rather than *grade*. *Zion's Herald*, on Methodist polity, Oct. 6, 1841. Still they appear to sympathize with Episcopacy. Soon after the establishment of an 'episcopate' in the Protestant Episcopal church of the United States, Dr. Coke, the presiding Methodist bishop, expressed his entire accordance with the Protestant Episcopal church, in their order and discipline, and his earnest desire for a union between the two denominations. And though there is now, perhaps, less sympathy between these hierarchies than ever before, yet, as late as 1840, this proposal was renewed by a leading Methodist.

"So far, then, as this church approves of the constitution and discipline of the Protestant Episcopal church, so far must we disapprove of Episcopal Methodism.

"2. The national character of this church is another objection to it. All the congregations throughout the United States are regarded as but parts of one great national establishment. In no church system in these United States, Popery alone excepted, is there such a centralizing of power as in this. Viewed in its national character, it is an oligarchy. Six bishops are at its head, as its supervisors, and, to a very great extent, its uncontrolled governors. And these, unlike the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal church, appear not to be permanently confined to particular dioceses, or districts, but to have equal power and authority in every part of the church, over its spiritual and temporal affairs. More than *two thousand* travelling preachers, in every part of the United States, are under their control, and go and come at their bidding—a power which the very *apostles*, the vicegerents of Christ himself, never pretended to exercise over the pastors and teachers of particular churches.

"3. The absolute and exclusive power of the clergy, in the

government of this church, is, in our view, another very objectionable feature in the system.

“The United States are divided into thirty-three ‘conferences;’ in each of which there is a yearly meeting of all the travelling preachers, and such as are eligible to this office, with a presiding bishop at their head, called the ‘yearly conference.’ This body of clergymen manage the affairs of the church within their conference.

“From these yearly conferences a number of delegates, one for every twenty-one members, go up to form the ‘general conference,’ which has in its hands the supreme power of the church. Into neither of these bodies are any laymen admitted. The general government of this church, then, is entirely in the hands of the bishops and clergy — a most unscriptural and dangerous location of power; as is manifest from the infallible word of God, and from the past history of the church.

“4. Not only are the people thus robbed of all participation in the general government under which they live, but likewise of all right to call, ordain, retain, or dismiss their ministers. The general conference chooses the bishops. *Discipline*, chap. i. § 4. The yearly conferences choose the travelling elders and deacons, and present them to the bishops for ordination. *Discipline*, chap. i, § 6, 7. The quarterly conferences recommend the preachers to the yearly conferences. The bishops appoint the presiding elders, who are virtually bishops in their respective circuits. Section 5. The presiding elders, the travelling elders, the deacons, and the preachers, are, as we have already seen, all under the direction of the bishops, who station them where they think proper, and remove them when they think best, subject to certain general restrictions. Sections 4, 5, 8. Answer 11, 12.

“In none of these important matters is the voice of the people heard. I mean the *body* of the people, in distinction from the officers of the church.” pp. 230, 231, 232.

Secondly, priestcraft is not only the product of all ages, but it is the defender of every bigoted creed. The priests of the

old nations were in some respects the benefactors of the human race; but in most instances they were a curse. Reinhard and others have shown that, though the sacerdotal orders were appointed for the express purpose of preserving true religion, and extending good dispositions and feelings, yet it is well known that they not only neglected this important calling, but acted in direct opposition to the duties imposed upon them. They were every where zealous to maintain and propagate the crudest notions of religion, and the most senseless forms of superstition; to cry down and suppress all the new light and information that might be derived from philosophy, while they favored the bitter hostilities which originated in antique creeds, and employed them to their own advantage. In Egypt, and through all the nations of the East, priests bent all their powers of artifice to secure their own dominion, and maintain the dependence of kings upon their order, without doing any thing towards enlightening and improving the people.

When Jesus Christ appeared on earth, he came to destroy ecclesiastical tyranny, by founding a kingdom purely *spiritual*; one that might be admitted into all countries without the cumbersome use of sacerdotal enginery. Whatever may be the modifications of the civil constitution, and the vicissitudes of climate, or time, he prescribed only two ceremonies, which have a noble simplicity, and can be observed wherever men reside, without priests to mystify or turn them to a perverted use. Every thing was left, both by Jesus and the apostles, to the judgment and conscience of those who might embrace the true religion, and follow only the word of God, as best expounded and exemplified in the lessons and life of the great Redeemer. They well knew that therein nothing is said of sacred places or stated feasts; of pious journeys and pilgrimages, or of oppressive ceremonies binding on those whom the truth has made free. The whole earth is God's temple; in every place, man can lift up holy hands; every creature of God is clean and good, and no worshipper is to have dictated to him, by earthly authority, the attitude and language in which

he shall divinely adore. Jesus attacked the pernicious traditions and presumption of the ancient priesthood on all occasions, (Matt. v. 21, et seq.) and did it with an earnestness which evinced itself by the most vehement reproaches. Matt. xv. 1—9. Mark vii. 1—13. Matt. xxiii. 1—39. He compared all these merely human precepts to poisonous plants, which must be entirely rooted up, (Matt. xv. 13,) bitterly censured the Pharisees for taking so much pains to make proselytes to a disfigured religion, (Matt. xxiii. 15,) and finally engaged to deliver the poor, oppressed people from the whole burden of the Mosaic law, and give them the easy yoke of a pure, spiritual religion in its stead. Matt. xi. 28, 29. By the representation which Jesus gave of the doctrine of the one only and supreme God, and of the nature of acceptable worship, very important objects were to be accomplished. He exhibited true religion with such clearness and simplicity, that those of the humblest capacities, even children, might comprehend it. By calling God *Father*, and putting that endearing name in the first breath of all our supplications, the Savior would extirpate those frightful images under which both Jews and Gentiles had contemplated the Deity, and substitute a childlike confidence, a heartfelt love, instead of that slavish mortification and the service extorted by fear, which had usually been thought necessary for appeasing him and retaining his favor. "In particular, the priests, those promoters and protectors of superstition, who had hitherto claimed for themselves the authority of an indispensable mediatorship between God and man, and thus rendered themselves of very great importance, *were to be deprived of their influence forever*; for he who knows God to be a condescending and affectionate Father can apply to him directly, and needs not a prior introduction from such mediators and confidants."

Christ would teach man that there is no spiritual progress for him till he discovers that truth is as much a thing to be felt as a thing to be perceived, and that it is only a very small portion of truth that the philosopher's analysis, the logician's syllo-

gisms, theological dogmas, and sectarian creeds, can impart to the immortal soul. The searcher after true light and strength will have to sweep from his path a dense host of antiquated chimeras, before he can run rejoicingly, like an unbound giant, in the way of holiness. To mould, transform, and elevate, all the elements of our deathless nature is the legitimate influence of Christianity, and not to degrade it into a monstrosity absorbing the entire being, and deadening much that is eminently and beautifully human. One main cause of this unrighteous effect is the supposition, most earnestly inculcated by priestcraft, that religion consists in certain formal acts; whereas religious services are only the expressions of a sentiment which can with equal acceptance find utterance in a thousand other shapes beside those which temple shrines and gorgeous ceremonies exhibit. In the depths of the savage wilderness, amid the foaming billows of stormy ocean, or on thunder-scarred mountain peaks, the incense of an honest heart can rise in prayer to the Omnipotent as fervently and as welcomingly as from beneath the lofty cathedral dome. And even when the lips move not, and when the eyes, weighed down by sickness and sorrow, are closed, the heart, gratefully devout, can throb its silent adoration as sacredly as if it mingled its tones with the melody of thousands, and bowed ostentatiously before altar and priest. True worship is as different from the mere forms on which priestcraft mainly depends, as a hundred beautiful flowers, fragrantly blooming in the verdant, dewy, and sunny field, are unlike the mere arithmetical statement that there are a hundred of them. To substitute this in the place of that simple and divine adoration which Christ appointed and Heaven requires, is worse than to prefer a *hortus siccus* to the delicious odors and diversified hues of a blooming parterre; it would be the superstitious madness that drains the veins of a human being to make a warm bath for his feet.

The church, so far as it corresponds to its true character, is Christianity realized in the world. The life of Christ, as the life of perfect love to God and man, binds those who share it

into fellowship, and this is their only bond. As the God revealed in Christianity is a God of order, so must this fellowship, notwithstanding the variety of gifts and characters therein comprised, constitute one perfect whole, organized and developed according to its own essential and inherent laws. "If," says Ullmann, "the church is only the natural expression, the realization of Christianity, then must the essential characteristic of Christianity be that of the church. We therefore say, on the one hand, the church is no mere moral institution, no school for the dissemination of doctrine, or the promotion of redemption or reconciliation; but, on the other hand, as Christ taught and bore witness to the truth, so must the church teach and bear witness; as he, by word and deed, promoted morality, so must the church cultivate and cherish it; the redemption and reconciliation which he revealed, the church should, with all its powers, diffuse and render available. But all must be done with reference to the central point of Christianity, which is the life and character of Christ himself; and the more all secondary objects are kept subordinate to this main principle, the better will the church fulfil its office, the more Christian will it become." Now, as eighteen hundred years ago, men can become Christians only by entering into a vital communion with the divine character of Christ, and, through it, with God. They can participate in the full benefits of Christianity only so far as they persevere with growing steadfastness in this communion, obeying every command, so that Christ becomes more and more a living existence in their souls, pervading their whole life, and calling forth within them a higher nature, like unto his own.

Creeds fabricated by priestly craft constitute the heaviest and most corroding chains ever fastened on human minds. The inquirer after truth is drawn away from the words and example of the great Teacher, and confused by those who shout around him their own articles so violently, that the voice of the only infallible Master is nearly drowned. And what are these substitutes for the plain teachings of the New Testament, but mis-



erable skeletons, freezing abstractions, unintelligible dogmas, as dubious to the understanding as they are repugnant to the heart? The confessions of faith, books of discipline, and creed concoctions, in general adopted by most Protestant sects, embody the grand idea of infallibility, as truly as the decrees of Trent and the Vatican; and, if I were compelled to choose between the two, most assuredly would I prefer the despotism of Rome; for that has some historical dignity, if no other merit. The spirit which has dug dreary dungeons, kindled martyr-flames, and invented instruments of exquisite torture for the body, yet reappears, from time to time, in little books, manifestoes of synods, conferences, and councils, to exert a no less fearful influence over the human mind. The bonds of gross outward intolerance may be broken, and the pressure of state religion may be removed, yet the agents of evil, who, at an earlier day, exerted their unhallowed tyranny even in this free land, still lurk with cunning alacrity to spring upon us those spiritual chains that eat like aspics into the soul. Were it not that the spirit of the people is essentially liberal, and that intelligent conceptions of republican Christianity are spreading wider and deeper every day, human auspices would be sad indeed. Coalitions are as practicable in the church as in the state; and recent events show that minor differences can be sunk, for the purpose of achieving a common end. If the ministry, instead of forming alliances among themselves, would exercise individual faith in a higher operation of Christianity, a nobler development of humanity, they would more directly and efficiently commend themselves to the popular heart, and more gloriously sway the destinies of all mankind. Christ was the greatest of reformers; and perpetual reform is the characteristic spirit of a true ministry. Without this spirit of truth and power, fine churches are but painted sepulchres, and priestly disquisitions in them are but sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Wherever we meet with persons who teach that the special mercy of God and the saving power of the Holy Spirit are bestowed through a wafer, bread and wine, some

form of benediction, baptism, and ordination, or any other outward ministration, from the hands or lips of a frail fellow-mortal, there is priestcraft the most rife to be reprobated and despised.

Christ came to put an end to hereditary faith, to make each man's belief original and independent with himself, directly drawn from the only source of Christian doctrine and practice. Nothing is more certain than that religion is a subject upon which all persons are under obligations the most solemn to deliberate, choose, and act for themselves. Freedom of inquiry is a high privilege, as safe for the masses as for individuals; and this boon Christ procured for all our race. He never designed that a few should lead, and that the multitude should be compelled to follow in their steps. But what are the spirit and language of many professed teachers of Christianity? "Out of my creed there is no orthodoxy; out of my church there is no salvation." But, fortunately, the days of such priestly arrogance are numbered.

"The spirit cannot alway sleep in dust  
Whose essence is ethereal; they may try  
To darken and degrade it; it may rust  
Dimly a while, but cannot wholly die;  
And, when it wakens, it will send its fire  
Intenser forth and higher."

Priestcraft lays hold of man as soon as he is born, and holds him in degrading vassalage from the cradle to the grave. Infant sprinkling, youthful catechizing, confirmation, creeds, and extreme unction,—these are some of the machinery which sacerdotal falsehood, in varied forms, employs to cramp the free thoughts and mould the eternal destinies of its unhappy dupes. Imbecile babelings are made church-members by a senseless rite, before they have a will of their own to exercise, and are often domineered over, by artificial restraints, against their will, until, having grown mature enough to judge for themselves, they either supinely yield to the tyranny that has been imposed upon them, or recklessly repel all religions as

equally absurd. Blind superstition or mad infidelity is the common result by priestcraft produced.

It sounds very inconsistent, if not absurd, to hear sectarians boasting of their Protestantism, and abusing most violently the superstitions of the Romish church, while they themselves attach such efficacy to the very practice which constituted the first radical corruption of Christianity, and has ever remained the chief strength of the Papacy. As a specimen of the most recent views on this subject, the following extracts are adduced from "Dodsworth on Romanism and Dissent," the American edition, printed at Baltimore, 1842. Speaking of "*the church*," the author says, "It is certainly most surprising that any one can call in question the fact that she holds the efficacy of Christian baptism. By adopting the Nicene Creed into her formularies, she calls upon her members to profess their belief in 'one baptism for the remission of sins.' In her baptismal service she adopts such language as this: 'We call upon Thee for this person, or this infant, that he, coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.' 'Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin.' And after baptism, 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church.' Consistently with this, in her Catechism, she teaches every one of her baptized children to say, 'My baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;' and asserts that 'the inward and spiritual grace' of *baptism* is 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for, being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.'

"Such, then, is clearly the doctrine of the church of England. She teaches her members to look back to their baptism as the instrument whereby they were grafted into Christ, and began to receive from him the element of a new and spiritual life;

not only as a badge and token of our Christian profession, but rather as 'a sure witness and effectual sign of grace, and of God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.'" pp. 126, 127.

Herein we are distinctly told that sprinkling is a saving ordinance; and, on page 129, we are further informed that infants unfortunately born beyond the pale of "*the church*" cannot, even by sprinkling, be saved. The author continues, "The general rule obviously is, that those children alone are entitled to baptism who are born within the bosom of the church, of parents in her communion. So Hooker teaches: 'God by covenant requireth in the elder sort faith and baptism; in children, the sacrament of baptism alone, whereunto he hath also given them right, by special privilege of birth, within the bosom of the holy church.' *Ecc. Pol.* v. 62. And again: 'We are plainly taught of God, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) that the seed of faithful parentage is holy from the very birth, which albeit we may not so understand, as if children of believing parents were without sin; or grace from baptized parents derived by propagation; or God by covenant and promise tied to save any in mere regard of their parents' belief; yet seeing that to all professors of the name of Christ this preëminence above infidels is freely given, that the fruit of their bodies bringeth into the world with it a present interest and right to those means wherewith the ordinance of Christ is, that his church shall be sanctified,' &c. *Ib.* v. 60.

"In the time of Augustin, the question arose whether children whose parents were under excommunication and the church's censures were entitled to baptism; which that father decides in the affirmative, maintaining that the excommunication of a parent did not deprive the child of his right to baptism. But in this case, as in every other, it is obviously presupposed that the sponsors of such child are in communion with the church. This, indeed, appears from the analogous case of children born of heathen or Jewish parents."

These are the blessed offspring who from the first are trained to believe that their salvation began with a few drops of water on their brow or linen, and that it will be perfected if they carefully "look to the *south* while reading prayers, and to the *west* while reading lessons." Coleman, in tracing the rise of Episcopacy, makes a remark or two quite pertinent to this point. Says he, "Very few of that communion know or believe that the prescribed mode of baptism in the church of England is *immersion*. This, however, is precisely and accurately the fact. The words of the formulary for the public baptism of infants in their Book of Common Prayer are as follows: 'then, naming it after them, (if they shall certify that the child may well endure it,) he (the priest) shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily, saying, &c. But, if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it.' In this, under circumstances the most improbable, an innovation has been made of which the mass of the people are totally ignorant. The mode of baptism has been entirely changed without their knowledge or belief, while every churchman holds in his hand the prayer-book which describes the exact manner in which the ordinance shall be administered. Shall we wonder, then, at the gradual change in the government of the church in that early age, when every thing favored its introduction, and in the absence of any written constitution, or remaining records of the primitive church?" This shows what priestcraft has been able to effect in changing the prescribed form of a rite; and let us here add, that whether sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, is insisted on as having in itself a saving efficacy, the claim set up is equally impious and absurd. To "believe and be baptized" is undoubtedly the duty which Christ has laid equally on every one. But to believe with one's own mind, and to be baptized according to one's own conviction of duty in view of the teachings and example of our Lord, we hold to be duties equally clear, and indispensable to the full discharge of the one grand obligation upon which all true religion is based.

Christians who lived at the period of the Lutheran reformation, and who caught a large share of the true spirit of Christ, were far from thinking to analyze it; they had yet to free themselves and their religion from the stifling encumbrances of ecclesiastical authority — a task which they never radically performed. All their struggles were practical, and confined *within* the sphere of the church; all that lay beyond was for them of little interest, and hence Christianity to their eyes presented but a limited view. The moderns have attempted a more exact definition of the distinctive character of the gospel, and a wider application of its beneficent influence. This has been the natural result of their advance in historical and philosophical culture, which enables them to perceive that Christianity, independent, original, and divinely derived, is the model of purest republicanism, the teacher of most comprehensive wisdom, and inspirer of the divinest life. Progressive improvement will undoubtedly still advance under the direction of merciful Providence, until the last priest shall have perished with the last anti-scriptural creed, and then the whole disburdened and rejoicing world may sing with Pollok, —

“ O love destroying, cursed bigotry !  
 Cursed in heaven, but cursed more in hell,  
 Where millions curse thee, and must ever curse.  
 Religion’s most abhorred ! perdition’s most  
 Forlorn ! God’s most abandoned ! hell’s most damned !  
 The infidel, who turned his impious war  
 Against the walls of Zion, on the rock  
 Of ages built, and higher than the clouds,  
 Sinned, and received his due reward ; but she  
 Within her walls sinned more : of Ignorance  
 Begot, her daughter, Persecution, walked  
 The earth from age to age, and drank the blood  
 Of saints, with horrid relish drank the blood  
 Of God’s peculiar children — and was drunk ;  
 And in her drunkenness dreamed of doing good.  
 The supplicating hand of innocence,  
 That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath  
 The lion pause — the groans of suffering most

Severe, were nought to her : she laughed at groans :  
No music pleased her more ; and no repast  
So sweet to her as blood of men redeemed  
By blood of Christ. Ambition's self, though mad,  
And nursed on human gore, with her compared,  
Was merciful. Nor did she always rage :  
She had some hours of meditation, set  
Apart, wherein she to her study went,  
The inquisition, model most complete  
Of perfect wickedness, where deeds were done, —  
Deeds ! let them ne'er be named, — and sat and planned  
Deliberately and with most musing pains,  
How, to extremest thrill of agony,  
The flesh, and blood, and souls of holy men,  
Her victims, might be wrought ; and when she saw  
New tortures of her laboring fancy born,  
She leaped for joy, and made great haste to try  
Their force — well pleased to hear a deeper groan."

In the third place, let us remark that priestcraft is not only the product of every age, and the defender of every bigoted creed, but it is also the chief foe to Christianity and greatest curse to mankind.

Christ came to earth to establish thereon a church, not of the clergy, but of the people ; his own true disciples, transformed in heart and divine in purpose, the conservators of all excellence, the teachers of all truth, Christian patriots, to renovate and bless their race. Having composed his church of those only whom he had healed of the worst malady and illumined with the best light, and in the original organization having constructed it on the most perfect republican principles, Christ designed each branch to be the model and school of perfect freedom, the Gilead of its district, and the Pharos of the world.

Primitive Christianity had something better than a pedantic priesthood to lay its broad and salutary foundations after the pattern revealed from heaven ; it had its Marks, as well as its Peters ; its Timothies as well as its Pauls. And from the apostolic age, from the morrow of the divine foundation of

the church till a long after period, all historical monuments positively assert, that a clergy, properly so called, an ecclesiastical body established upon the basis of a hierarchy, and recruiting its ranks according to conventional rules, did nowhere exist. The clerical office, with its incommunicable privileges, its pretended indelibility and investiture, to whatever remoteness it may presume to ascend, is far from being as old as Christianity, but began in the degenerate age when the distinction between priest and layman first commenced. It was then that our holy religion came to be regarded, not as a system of free and divine instruction, but of arbitrary human dogmas; when knowledge and faith were theoretical only, instead of being exalted doctrine applied — practice, holiness, love, life. Then, as is ever the case under like circumstances, authority was introduced into the hallowed sphere of Christianity, to fortify imbecile and hollow creeds, and truth was strangely transformed into something absolute and despotic, to facilitate the despotism of crafty men. Having usurped the functions of a governing body, they gave a preponderance of the earthly over the heavenly power of Christianity, and ended by decreeing formulas of faith — forging those heavy chains, which in some measure have ever since kept the masses of the world under the yoke of ecclesiastical dominion.

The grand curse of the day is the intralment of man's nobler nature, the sophistication of conscience through conventionalism, the overthrow of which giant evil is destined to evolve all the blessings which mental and moral culture can diffuse. Sacerdotal dynasties of every order and degree will soon learn that the soul of man is not a frozen formula, on the glassy surface of which they may with impunity scribble their dictations, but a free, fervid, and fragrant vitality, branching forth majestic aspirations toward the heavens of eternal truth. The world is beginning to regard Christianity in its true light, not fragmentary, but as a *whole*, at once historical and ideal, doctrinal and practical, human and divine; capable equally of individual and universal application, to be studied in its origin,



its essential elements, the conditions of its progress and certainty of final triumph.

The true creative energy of religion, to which now, as at first, its main influence is owing, consists, not in the propagation of abstract ideas, but in legitimate fruits of pious souls, rather than in the sanctimonious cantings of sectarian creeds. Christianity is doctrine, so far as it relates to the circumstances and divine revelations that signalized its birth; but it is more than this, a testimony, glad tidings, *gospel*, not in selfish axioms and frigid deductions, but by religious and moral principles expanded in the spiritual consciousness of its recipients, and embodied in beneficent deeds. No doctrine can possess either dignity or force apart from the spirit which was first exemplified in the life of Christ, and designed, in a smaller or larger measure, to be practically displayed by all who profess to follow in his steps. He who has not erected a temple to the Deity in his own bosom will never be a true and holy worshipper; and he who neglects both the example and precepts of the Lord, whose disciple he professes to be, will not fail to dishonor the profession he has made.

One of the most beautiful characteristics, and one of the greatest advantages of Christianity, is the independence of belief and life which it both requires and rewards. In the labyrinth of existence in which we all wander, not knowing whither the brittle thread will lead, when or where we may die, it is the blessed prerogative of a true Christian, to carry his priesthood always in his own heart, feeling that redemption is not bound to any hierarchical constitution or sacerdotal rite. He believes that his progress toward God will not be arrested when no longer accompanied by a human guide; that his chief resource lies in recognizing the light of divine truth, and remembering, with an humble, docile heart, that the only priest we are bound to serve is the great One who ever lives to intercede for us on high. The love of such a believer is derived from his faith no less than his faith is nourished and purified by his love. In his faith, knowledge and obedience are comprehended

in delightful union; so that these elements can as little be separated from it, "as the light of the fire from its warmth." The character of a true disciple, like that of his Lord, can be very imperfectly understood, if we regard it as consisting wholly either in morality or in piety: it lies rather in the symmetrical combination of the two — in holiness, a life *from*, and *in*, and *for* God. This is that creative and ennobling power Christ brought to earth; not a mere abstract theory of the invisible world, but a redeeming influence, which awakens in its subjects a capacity for union with God, and causes them to radiate with the genial effulgence of charity all around.

All true religion is essentially communion of man with his Maker, in which there is but one Mediator; it is that which stands between God and man, and which in Christ blends both in one. Such being the relation between the reason as well as heart of man and its Author, every act of rational devotion must not be an artificial ceremony, but a living reality, the mutual operation of spirits finite and infinite. God must stoop to communicate himself to the worshipper; and he by simultaneous act must raise himself to God, and have a consciousness of his presence, not in idea alone, but in spirit, power, and love. But priestcraft most effectually destroys this central point and chief glory of Christianity, by degrading what in it is life, reality, and moral energy, to an unsatisfactory speculation or hollow form. Hence the importance of our keeping before us constantly and only Christ, the whole Christ, as he was possessed by the apostles and primitive Christians, who invites us to stand before him independent of all self-constituted rabbis, to receive light for our understanding, joy for our heart, guidance and support for a temporal and eternal career.

Life can proceed only from life. The priest contrasts man and God because he wishes to make himself important as a messenger to a race whom he represents as superlatively degraded; but Christ came to render every man his own priest, by inviting all to himself in whom the human and divine are one, and teach us to rise to heaven by developing heavenly

graces in ourselves. Thus at the outset the Messiah demonstrated that his mission was not to confuse and oppress, but to teach and save. He would vanquish all obstacles to our emancipation from sin and perpetual progress in holiness, raising feverish and fainting spirits above the skies, where Jehovah breathes eternal blessedness on the sincere, the loving, and the free. Seeing man, the image of God, trampled in the dust by priestcraft, that God himself, in their estimation, may be fitly honored, the pitying Redeemer comes to our rescue, and imparts religious instruction so simple and yet potent, that the least educated need not err as to its import, nor the most sinful fail by its efficacy to be saved. The dead blank of our spiritual night he does not make still more dubious by the twinkling of a few artificial lights, but unveiled to every vision he hangs blazing on high the great luminary that smiles through every petty storm and eclipse, the king of our spiritual planetary system, the God of an ultimately cloudless and eternal day.

Every person has a vital interest in this question. In order that morality may be free, faith must be free also. If one is compelled to believe, he is also compelled to act. It is impossible to conceive a being endowed with moral liberty, who does not also possess religious freedom; which is merely saying, that a being is really free only when he is free in the whole of his being. Christianity, to attain pristine beauty and power again, must perfect itself; not by modifying its essence, which has been completely divine from the beginning, but by disengaging itself from earthly clogs, by emancipating itself from the entanglements of priestcraft, which envelop, obscure, and degrade it. Perfection in religious teaching is attained when that which constitutes its soul fulmines through its body, and manifests itself to the gaze of all with a sublime brilliancy, like the throne of God. This is its nature and only design. Its two weapons of warfare are light and love. From generation to generation, its invitation, resounding to the Nathaniels of every land, is, *Come and see!* Starting in the lowest vale

of life, the ocean of Mercy would roll its flood-tide abroad over the earth, to renew the energies of a fallen race, and bear them upward on its billows as they swell to be immersed anew in their divine source. But priestcraft is afraid of so much benevolence here below. It is as incapable of appreciating its worth as of measuring its proportions; therefore it goes on stupidly exacting impossible duties, denouncing impossible sins, confounding honest minds with conflicting dogmas, and to the utmost extent keeping Christianity in leading-strings. Condorcet said truly, "Kings persecute persons, priests opinion. Without kings, men must be safe; and without priests, minds must be free."

Christianity was strikingly characterized by its Author as leaven. This is destined to put the whole mass of mankind into a state of fermentation, that it may work itself clear of all heterogeneous grossness, purge itself of every form of error, absurdity, and delusion; until, by this natural process, it shall have refined and clarified our race with pure and profound views of truth. Our eyes, so delicately organized, and guarded with so much care, were not made to be closed and bandaged from the cradle to the grave, but to gaze freely on the beauties and sublimities of earth, sea, and sky. The soul of man, of all men, pants to contemplate brighter and broader glories than the natural vision can perceive; and is there a fiend more worthy of hell than he who would darken heaven from human view? Our business as Christians is to throw wide open to all mankind the temple gates of Truth. Her influence, when once it roots itself in the human heart, never dies: it lives, grows, multiplies itself, and becomes indestructible. The laws which guaranty this may be but dimly discerned, but their operation is constant, potent, and universal. Nothing is beneficial without this. "All the great advances made by society are spontaneous movements. The positive benefits which have flowed to man out of the fount of civil authority and law are few and comparatively trivial. Civilization owes far less to political instructions than they to civilization. Science has flourished

without the aid of law. Morality has purged itself of gross admixtures, and manners have passed through many revolutions, and refinement has reached its present pitch, and literature has spread abroad its blessings, not by means, but often in spite, of legislative interposition. And why not religion? Is it not, when once fairly planted in the human heart, the most powerful of all impulses? Does it not incessantly yearn to multiply itself? Are not all its tendencies to increase, to reproduction, to universality? Can it exist and be silent? Can it shake hands with indifference, or take home to its bosom a careless negligence of others' welfare? Die! It was not born to die. It is immortal. Nominalism may die—hypocrisy may give up the ghost. Priestly pretences, wearing the guise of Christianity, may want the factitious support derived from state enactments. But an enlightened apprehension and a cordial love of revealed truth will, up to the measure of its own existence, not only continue to live, but to work. Safely may it be left to its own noble impulses. It can neither dwindle nor decay. And if, at times, it disappears from the surface, it is only, like streams working their way through a subterraneous passage, to emerge again from obscurity in greater clearness, in larger breadth, in yet augmented power."

Of all the contemptible efforts of modern priestcraft, none can exceed in absurdity that which complacently eradicates from man the diviner half of his nature, and then proceeds to coerce the other half into the reception of its own husky dogmas, as the only food on which an immortal creature should feed. Reason and free will are strangled or denied, that a despotic system may be substituted in their place. The soul is killed to save the body. Truth, God's own word, as a great, earnest, awful reality, is kept out of sight, and the miserable victim is dwarfed into the pigmy proportions of the puny creed in which his cramped faculties are bound.

Bigotry is not the vice of a peculiar sect, but of every ruling party. Luther and his confederates imitated the powers of Rome in intolerance, as soon as they possessed the means.

Says D'Aubigné, "It was Luther, that great man of God, who, in this, as in every thing else, advanced at the head of his church. When, in 1527, the Reformed pleaded for brotherly love and Christian concord, he answered, 'Be such charity and unity cursed, even to the bottomless depths of hell.' He himself relates to one of his friends that, at the conference convoked at Marburg by the landgrave of Hesse, to unite the Lutherans and the Reformed, Zwingli, moved to tears, approached him, saying, 'There are no men on earth with whom I so much desire to be united as with the Wittenbergers.' And Luther repulsed the Zurich reformer, answering, 'Your spirit is not our spirit,' and refused to acknowledge Zwingli and the Swiss as *his brethren*.

"Since that day, a sectarian spirit has always pervaded Lutheranism. When, in 1553, the unhappy Reformed were driven from London by the unfeeling order of bloody Mary, they were cruelly repulsed, in the midst of winter, by the advice of the Lutheran theologians, from the walls of Copenhagen, of Rostock, of Lübeck, and of Hamburg, where they asked for shelter. 'Better Papists than Calvinists,' said they; 'better Mohammedans than Reformed.'"

Viewed as a whole, we hold Luther's influence in high esteem; but some portions of his creed and conduct have doubtless entailed much wrong on mankind. When Erasmus defended the existence and obligations of free will, the prophet of Wittenberg exclaimed, "No; in that which concerns God, in that which relates either to salvation or damnation, man has no freedom. He is subjugated to the will of God, or that of Satan; he is chained and a slave." (*Subjectus et servus est vel voluntatis Dei, vel voluntatis Satanae.*) This is bad enough belief, surely. His worse conduct, perhaps, is portrayed in the following extract from the works of W. J. Fox, now of the British parliament:—

"He had published an eloquent tract on Christian liberty. This work found its way, as such tenets, when once broached, will ever do, into other quarters than those for which it was

originally intended. It obtained circulation amongst the peasantry of Westphalia, Suabia, and the provinces adjoining the Rhine. These peasants were just in the condition of men whose ears would tingle at the very word *liberty*, whether Christian or otherwise. In their politically degraded state, it must have sounded to them as enchantingly as Paradise or Utopia would to others. They were at that time ground down under the horrible feudal system. The great bulk of them were slaves, who were bought and sold like any other marketable article; a class whom their masters multiplied systematically, by breeding, as jockeys do their horses, and with as little regard to the preference of the parties themselves. Their masters might wound and maim them at pleasure, and kill them with impunity, if the murder was not complained of within a day; and, even when that happened to be the case, the offence was only punished by the payment of a small pecuniary fine. The farmers and peasants were scarcely in a better condition than the slaves. They were subjected to those horrible imposts which have always been associated with the name of the feudal system. At the best, they could merely earn for themselves, out of the soil, a wretched pittance, just sufficient for their support; all the residue went to their lords. Their state was such, that, if a farmer was taken ill, no one connected with his farm would work a stroke more, knowing very well that, if the master died, whatever was in his house or upon his farm would be forthwith seized upon under pretence of arrears for rent, or fines and payments due to the lord upon passage of the farm from one tenant to another. The little miserable protection which the laboring people, slaves, and peasantry had, was only a kind of game-law regulation, to keep their proprietors from interfering with each other's property, and had no regard whatever to the parties for whose benefit they nominally existed. This complicated oppression was too much for human nature to bear, especially when these victims of tyranny found, in Martin Luther's tract, that there was such a thing in the world as liberty. They began to consult together whether they might not

have a little of this same good thing for themselves, in their social condition as well as in their theological opinions. This intercommunication led to coöperation among them, and, at length, they mustered 300,000 men. Having attained this strength, they issued a manifesto, claiming the right of commonage, and some of the most simple and elementary privileges which are due to humanity, in a tone and temper, a spirit of reason and moderation, which induced Voltaire to say that their manifesto would not have been unworthy of the signature of Lycurgus. In this state of things Luther was applied to. He first strongly advised the lords to be humane, then recommended the slaves to be obedient ; but, as neither the one party nor the other appeared disposed to adopt this advice, — and certainly it could not be expected that the vassals should return to obedience while the lords showed no symptoms of returning humanity, — why, then Luther first rebuked them both, and afterwards advised the princes of Germany to unite in their strength to put down the insubordination. No doubt excesses were perpetrated by this people ; history has not spared them ; history never spares the faults or excesses of democracy, or of unsuccessful insurrection ; the reason for which fact may be found in the connections and partialities of those by whom history has usually been written. A very great part of the alleged excesses of the Anabaptists of Munster, as they have been called, because a number of them were identified with the plain and homely flocks of the Baptists of Germany, have, beyond all doubt, been grossly exaggerated, piled up in heaps before the world, who have been taught to look back upon them as the most outrageous enthusiasts and fanatics that ever scourged mankind or disgraced the face of the earth. Yet, if we go to the original document from which they started, it is plain that this was only one portion of that great serf movement throughout Europe which took place about that period ; the feudal system being found every where so intolerable that the serfs, like trodden worms, writhed and rose against the oppression, having a glimmering and indistinct perception, but yet to them



an animating one, of a better state of things, wherein the equal value of each human being, and the just rights of humanity, should be acknowledged by all."

Civil and religious freedom were never designed to flow in two separate channels. Those who, in every age, take sides with the best and broadest interests of the people, defend this point as fundamental, while time-serving and sycophantic priests always oppose it. Every man is to be esteemed who honestly endeavors to give a reason for his belief, and claims the freedom of its peaceful enjoyment, however mistaken or absurd he may be. To despise the intellect of another, to hint his want of integrity, or to ridicule his convictions of right, is but poor evidence either of philosophical judgment or Christian charity. The spirit that leagued with an emperor and excited him to murder the Anabaptists of Munster, burned Servetus at Geneva, hunted Roger Williams beyond the boundaries of civilization with no less savage rage, persecuted the elder Carroll in Maryland, and more recently burned the convent at Charlestown, as well as the churches of Philadelphia, is part and parcel of the bigoted priestcraft that dug the prisons of Venice and erected the inquisition in Spain. Milton had good reason for asserting that "Presbyter is but old priest writ large." The Hildebrands of Rome may soon become obsolete; but we fear that it will take much longer to extirpate the "parish popes," who call themselves Protestant, and under whose benignant sway millions of the spiritually oppressed have had occasion to declare, as was said of the ancient Baptists of Germany, when some one doubted whether they really knew what "church authority meant: 'O, yes,' replied a Catholic divine; 'they know what church authority is, just as a dog knows a stick.'"

Pastors who rise from the people, are chosen and sustained by the free suffrages of the people, while they toil magnanimously for the greatest good of the greatest number, are undoubtedly among the best instrumentalities for promoting the general and highest good. On the contrary, a priesthood educated apart from and arbitrarily imposed upon the masses are

the greatest obstacle to their progress, because they are themselves sworn to think only certain things, which are prescribed for them, having begun their subscription to articles and creeds, which subscription has to be renewed with every preferment they truckle for, and every prerogative of oppression they obtain. Such training and such relations are hostile to progress in every department of social improvement and public enterprise. It is in direct conflict with whatever principles belong to the best interests of humanity; for those interests are intimately allied to the largest freedom and most unobstructed advancement. But attempts to effect the permanent thralldom of mankind, however cunning and fortified with power they be, cannot longer succeed. The mind and heart of the nations are arousing. Catholic priests withhold the communion cup from the laity, and Protestant priests arrogate the right of secret legislation over the household of faith, both classes uniting to make the sources of religious emotion and divine grace special monopolies limited to their own cliques. The people, however, are coming to search after truth for themselves, make their own regulations in moral affairs as in civil, bow in base vassalage to no human creed, swear allegiance to no selfish intercessor, but take God's word as their only guide, and Christ as their only Lord.

Liberty is the word inscribed on the banner of modern civilization, and is destined soon to shine still brighter on the banner of the world's Christianization. The soul of man demands free air to breathe, a wide and lofty area whereon to expand its faculties, and will remain no longer cramped. The Bible, fairly opened and fully translated before all ranks and conditions of mankind, with one Spirit to teach and one Mediator to atone and intercede, is the highest boon we can possess; and this, it is certain, the whole world will soon enjoy. Providence is loudly proclaiming that the shepherd was made for his flock, not the flock for the shepherd. Crumbling thrones, dispersed dynasties, rending chains and exploding revolutions in every zone, proclaim in tones of thunder, "God hath made of one

blood, and for the enjoyment of equal rights, all nations who dwell upon the face of the earth." The reverberations of this celestial proclamation will continue to roll onward with deepening tones, amid the blazings of still brighter splendors, till *the human mind shall endure no fetter, and the church of Christ crouch to no priest.*

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHURCH WITHOUT AN ARISTOCRAT.

WE have traced some of the baleful influences which encumber and degrade Christianity when subjected to the control of kings, popes, bishops, or priests. In this last discussion of the present series, we propose to consider the church without an aristocrat. We hold that aristocracy was the first foe of the church, has ever been but a hypocritical friend, and is a perpetual impediment as well as consummate disgrace.

The first and greatest foe Christianity encountered was aristocratic malignity and contempt. To meet and subdue this at the outset, our Savior proclaimed the universal law of human relationship, and, at a single stroke, reduced all mankind to one level. He recognized no higher personage in morals than our "neighbor," no other rule of conduct than love, and taught that, when we have discharged this duty to our "neighbor," we have fulfilled our obligation to all mankind; for we can owe our equals neither the allegiance of flattery nor any service that is constrained. Christ was the first to declare all men royal compeers and nobles by nature, each one sent on earth to do that for which he is fitted, and, with noble independence, to fill the niche he was ordained to fill. In tones that "open every cell where memory sleeps," he would have man speak to his brother man with magnanimous esteem as a sovereign like himself, and never pour forth libations to church and state,

or seek to hold the appointment of priests to offer fulsome sacrifices and obsequious oblations.

All who listen to other words, or follow the dictates of authority less exalted, are "after ill example gone astray." "One is not born," said he whom principle and nature made a republican, but circumstances and ambition an emperor,— "one is not born with a boot on his leg, and another with a pack-saddle on his back. There are no *naked kings* ; they must all be dressed." We enter upon the present existence invested with certain inalienable rights, which constitute natural liberty ; if we are components of a true republic, the enjoyment of our inherent rights is guarantied by righteous laws ; and this is civil liberty. Civil liberty is natural liberty established and protected upon fixed principles by equitable government, the rightful possession of all mankind, to bestow which in the highest and purest form is the grand prerogative of Christianity alone. Cicero defined a republic to be "the union of a multitude, cemented by an agreement in what is right, and a participation in what is useful." Christ announced the eternal law of true social and national organizations more definitely and divinely when he proclaimed that but one is our Master, and all we are brethren. Never, for one moment, are we to stand in awe before presumptuous rulers, civil or religious, "alien from heaven, with passions foul obscured ;" but reverence and obey only the almighty King, "who was on earth for our sakes crucified."

Truth, even the most abstract, invariably becomes the object of hatred, whenever practical virtue is not the object of love ; and as hatred, by its intrinsic nature, is destructive, in the same manner as love is conservative, man, brutalized by sensuality, and given up to physical pleasures, naturally becomes a hateful destroyer. His obdurate soul gloats over spectacles of ruin and blood, while he confirms barbarous tastes and ferocious habits : hence it is remarkable that all people who are incredulous or impious are voluptuaries, and the voluptuous are always cruel. As a primary example,

look at pagan nations : what forgetfulness of humanity in war as in peace, in laws as in customs, in their temples as at the theatre, in the heart of the father as in that of a tyrant with his scourge ! Under such circumstances, what abject materialism do we see in religion, and what aversion to those doctrines which tend to elevate men and spiritualize their thoughts ! Polished and erudite Greece condemned Socrates to martyrdom because he despised the gross superstitions of his country ; and those same refined patrician Greeks, crowned with flowers and singing exquisite songs, strangled human victims, and covered their territory with altars the most infamous.

Always the aristocratical subjugation of soul to sense produces haughty opposition to the noblest intellectual and moral truths, and is the only explanation we need seek for the profound hatred which, in all ages, certain nations and ranks have manifested toward the example and doctrines of Christ. It is the perpetual and deadly conflict of *the flesh against the spirit*. The one would degrade and destroy ; the other tends constantly to enfranchise, enlighten, and render divine, through those precepts and influences which are the aggregate and manifestation of all the truths useful to mankind. When Christianity first appeared, the human race were universally involved in the grossest sensuality. What little worship remained on earth was but an empty phantom, allied to no substantial belief, but a mere ceremony preserved by habit, because of its ostentatious pomp suited to lascivious festivals, and, above all, because of its relation to civil institutions. The religion of that age inspired neither faith nor veneration. The sages and grandees, who first produced the degeneracy they could but despise, committed religion to the masses with contempt, who, less corrupt than the aristocrats, still continued to imagine, even in ignoble emblems, something divine. Nevertheless, there existed really no other religion than that of voluptuousness ; and the sects most sincere at first, degenerated rapidly into factitious austerity, and, by a confusion of

ideas, which passed into current language, went even so far as to identify virtue with pleasure.

The "upper classes," as they are usually termed, but really the most degraded, and who have ever demonstrated their superiority only by standing aloof from the greatest good of the greatest number, as they were the most active corrupters of ancient religions, so were they the most malignant foes to Christianity, from the first. All who have sacrificed their worldly interests and comfort for the good of their fellow-men, and been impelled to painful efforts by no motive but love to God and his creatures, are viewed and treated by them in every age as the vilest criminals, and as enemies to their arrogant prerogatives. The aristocrats of Judea, under the pretence of patriotism, entreated that Jeremiah might be put to death, because "*he weakened the hands of the men of war, and of all the people;*" of Paul they said, "*We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition;*" and of Christ himself, "*We found this fellow perverting the nation.*" But the teachers of truth and freedom the most divine persevere in their beneficent enterprise, knowing that the love of liberty, turbulent though it be deemed by exclusive circles, has so much affinity to law, and so wholesome a jealousy of force, that, if generously treated, it composes in the end popular disorders, and confers the widest and most salutary blessings on all. When Christianity shall come at length to pour its tide of sacred republicanism through the chief arteries of the body politic, it will impart healthful action to limbs long palsied by the inactivity which tyranny has produced, and elevate the masses into the gladsome possession of those functions of which all have need. Says Sir James Mackintosh, "The generous sentiments of natural equality are so deeply engraven on the human heart, and so inseparably blended with the dictates of reason and conscience, that no appeal to them can be wholly vain; their power over those who grievously suffer from their violation never can cease to be great."

The ancient republics were much more aristocratic than democratic in the form and spirit of their institutions. The mass of the people were slaves ; and those that were nominally free, with a few exceptions, were excluded from popular influence and power. The few were as entirely the masters, as autocrats and priests were in Persia and Egypt. Petty tyrants rose up with blasphemous pretensions to the right of excluding their fellow-men from the bountiful repast of providence and grace. In their despotic lust of possession, they were eager then, as now, to monopolize the popular share ; or, worse still, they would frighten or coerce the common people to forsake the exalted privileges which Heaven designed all equally to grasp and enjoy. These are the persons whose character, conduct, and fearful destiny, are so strikingly described by our Lord, whose equalizing spirit and ennobling doctrines they always so much hate. The true Light "came unto his own, and his own received him not." "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : woe unto you, lawyers ! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge ; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?" And when some well-disposed listeners inquired of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" they were obliged to reply, "Save yourselves from this unward generation." Arrogant and hypocritical aristocrats were Christ's most malignant adversaries, and the worst obstacles which the apostles met.

It is recorded of Cornelia, the noble mother of the Gracchi, that, on a certain occasion, when some vulgar and haughty gossip boasted of worldly wealth, ornaments, and power, she proudly and magnanimously cried, pointing to her children, some of them the future saviors of Rome from aristocratic thralldom, "These are my jewels." Thus of the true church

of Christ, the mother of all exalted virtues, patriotic, civilizing, and saving. Her brightest ornaments are they who recognize the great brotherhood of the human race, who labor to break down all iniquitous oppression, and to raise all to a like participation of unclouded light and undistinguished love. Says Pollok,—

“ ‘He was the freeman whom the truth made free;’—  
 Who first of all the bands of Satan broke;  
 Who broke the bands of Sin; and for his soul,  
 In spite of fools, consulted seriously;  
 In spite of fashion persevered in good;  
 In spite of wealth or poverty, upright;  
 Who did as reason, not as fancy, bade;  
 Who heard temptation sing, and yet turned not  
 Aside; saw Sin bedeck her flowery bed,  
 And yet would not go up; felt at his heart  
 The sword unsheathed, yet would not sell the truth;  
 Who, having power, had not the will to hurt;  
 Who blushed alike to be, or have, a slave;  
 Who blushed at nought but sin, feared nought but God;  
 Who, finally, in strong integrity  
 Of soul, ’midst want, or riches, or disgrace,  
 Uplifted calmly sat, and heard the waves  
 Of stormy folly breaking at his feet;  
 Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul reproach,  
 And both despised sincerely; seeking this  
 Alone—the approbation of his God,  
 Which still with conscience witnessed to his peace.  
 This, this is freedom, such as angels use,  
 And kindred to the liberty of God.  
 First-born of Virtue! daughter of the skies!  
 The man, the state in whom she ruled, was free;  
 All else were slaves of Satan, Sin, and Death.”

Secondly, aristocracy was not only the first foe of the church, but has ever remained, at best, but a hypocritical friend.

The true principles of republican Christianity do not consist in degrading the higher ranks to the lowest, but in elevating the greatest possible number to the highest standard of



independence and intelligence. Hence the divine Author of our faith, when rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, demanded of them the exercise of charity, liberty, and light, toward every human being, because these would guaranty perfectibility to religious institutions, and impart to them an invincible force. That which is most needed to promote human welfare, is a bold and independent spirit of inquiry, which will seize on all classes, and sift every question of political or religious right to its last analysis. Every mind needs something which is more reasonable than coercion, and less dubious than priestly dialectics; and this our greatest necessity is abundantly supplied by the doctrines of Christ, which impart to every honest inquirer too much light to suffer him long to remain the dupe of either force or fraud. Despotism, disguised under martial or sacerdotal forms, for thousands of years, was the chief means resorted to to govern the world. But, in Christianity, the discovery has been made, that the agency which is at once the most powerful and salutary in its operation, consists in that inward spiritual force which prompts the best private virtues and generates the freest and most beneficent public opinion. The tendency of this is to draw light from every source it can reach, and concentrate all the rays it accumulates upon the best interests it can promote.

The men who most perseveringly oppose this heavenly influence are they who plead "the right divine" for kings, popes, bishops, or priests to govern wrong. They throw before the people "an infinity of impertinent and vain things," and corrupt the popular mind and heart through the distorted dogmas of their own misguided wills. They are "Jove's satellites much less than Jove," but full of pagan adoration at the footstool of the worldly great. The drapery around the seats of prelatical and regal power is almost always crimson, as if yet wet with blood, and aristocrats have a strong affinity for that. But they never averted a great danger nor promoted a great good. They are ever ready to deprive their

fellow-men of that feeling of infinity, without which nothing grand is accomplished, and no lofty height attained; but to aid in such tasks suits neither their talents nor ambition. The character of such base sycophants is well described by Milton: "A king must be adored like a demigod, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expense and luxury, masks and revels, to the debauching of our prime gentry, both male and female . . . to the multiplying of a servile crew, not of servants only, but of nobility and gentry, bred up then to the hopes, not of public, but of court offices, to be stewards, chamberlains, ushers, grooms; . . . and the lower their minds, debased with court opinions, contrary to all virtue and reformation, the haughtier will be their pride and profusion."

The Christian and republican bard of *Paradise Lost* had witnessed enough of aristocratic meanness and oppression to make him denounce it in strong terms. For instance, when Richard Cromwell fled before popular rebellion, he took with him two large trunks full of those addresses and congratulations, customary with all servile creatures, in honor of those who possess and pervert the uses of power. In these addresses he was told that God had given him the supreme authority for the *happiness* of the three kingdoms. "What have you in those trunks?" said some one to him. "The *happiness* of the English nation," he replied with a laugh. Such jeering and mockery constitute the most sacred solicitude ever felt by aristocracies and their pets for the suffering masses of mankind. The Bible tells us of a certain king who lived a wild beast in the woods seven years, and then re-assumed the human form. It has often happened that such is the lot of the people. For seven years they are the ferocious beast, and then they become men. But their madness has been produced by the regal wrongs they have endured, and revolutions are beginning to metamorphose their condition, as well as elevate their hopes.

There are moral tories all over the world, as well as politi-

cal, neither of whom care any thing for what they term "the lower orders" beyond what their own interests will allow; they have no hearty desire for the general elevation and progress of the people. This might be expected, since aristocracy and true humanity are incompatible. *Humanity* they cannot have, who entertain no respect for men as MEN, as essentially on an equality with themselves, by a participation of the image of God. Such persons claim the right to dogmatize without examination, and impose their vagaries without restraint, as if they had discovered some nearer road to truth than that of argument, and some better means of moral conquest than that of conscience and common sense.

The combined horrors of kingcraft, priestcraft, and aristocraft, the chief support and most oppressive component of all, constitute one of the very greatest curses that has afflicted earth; and till its hydra heads are crushed beneath the car of true republicanism, there can be no perfect liberty for mankind. Seated around sumptuous tables, loaded with viands the most delicious, wines the most exquisite, and flowers of the sweetest perfume, men of might and women of fashion float gayly in an atmosphere of voluptuousness, and intoxicate every sense with pleasure. But what to them are the wants and woes of the Lazaruses groaning and famished at their doors? In the intervals of their hilarity, one hears the sharp sound of clattering fetters, and they smile; or the whizzing lash as it scarifies the skin or scoops out a fragment of bleeding flesh, and they smile; or the low groans which arise from some dungeon, and they smile; or the sobbings of inexpressible anguish, the death-rattle of famine, or the shriek of one about to be strangled, and still they smile, as if the world was made expressly to fill their coffers, and every thing beautiful and fair to satiate their lusts. But, thank God, the ranks which have heretofore most abused the rights and patience of the great masses, now provoke them to a just retribution. Through this fearful process the old world is now passing. "The strange illusion, that a man, because he

wears a garter or ribbon, or was born to a title, belongs to another race, is fading away ; and society must pass through a series of revolutions, silent or bloody, until a more natural order takes place of distinctions which grew originally out of force. Thus aristocracy, instead of giving order to society, now convulses it. So impossible is it for arbitrary human ordinations permanently to degrade human nature, or subvert the principles of justice and freedom ! The past is gone, the feudal castle is dismantled, the distance between classes greatly reduced. Unfortunate as it may be, the people have begun to think, to ask reasons for what they do, and suffer, and believe, and to call the past to account. Old spells are broken, old reliances gone. Men can no longer be kept down by pageantry, state robes, forms, and shows. Allowing it to be best that society should rest on the depression of the multitude, the multitude will no longer be quiet when they are trodden under foot, but ask impatiently for a reason why they too may not have a share in social blessings. Such is the state of things, and we must make the best of what we cannot prevent. Right or wrong, the people will think ; and is it not important that they should think justly ? that they should be inspired with the love of truth, and instructed how to seek it ? that they should be established by wise culture in the great principles on which religion and society rest, and be protected from skepticism and wild speculation, by intercourse with enlightened and virtuous men ? It is plain that, in the actual state of the world, nothing can avail us but a real improvement of the mass of the people. No stable foundation can be laid for us but in men's minds. Alarming as the truth is, it should be told, that outward institutions cannot now secure us. Mightier powers than institutions have come into play among us — the judgment, the opinions, the feelings of the many ; and all hopes of stability, which do not rest on the progress of the many, must perish."

The influence of feudal institutions has ever been unqualifiedly pernicious in the old world, and was imparted in quite

too large measures in the first settlement of the new. That influence still remains among us in some degree, and cannot be too soon extirpated from our institutions, root and branch. Sir Walter Scott, in describing one of the original vassals in England, after depicting the other peculiarities of his costume, adds, "One part of his dress only remains, but it is too remarkable to be suppressed; it was a brass ring, resembling a dog's collar, but without any opening, and soldered fast round his neck; so loose as to form no impediment to his breathing; yet so tight as to be incapable of being removed, excepting by the use of the file. On this singular gorget was engraved, in Saxon characters, 'Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric.'" This describes the condition of "born thralls," in the hands of ancient aristocrats; but we think they are not demanded by the enlightened spirit of this age, and least of all should they be found associated with the boasted institutions of this free land.

If physical bondage yet remains to disgrace a portion of the United States, we yet enjoy the rights of conscience without restraint; and it is easy to learn to whom we are indebted for the inestimable boon. Bancroft, speaking of the priestcraft, inflamed and fortified by the primitive aristocracy of New England, says, "The larger number of the friends of Anne Hutchinson, led by John Clarke and William Coddington, proceeded to the south, designing to make a plantation on Long Island, or near Delaware Bay. But Roger Williams welcomed them to his vicinity; and his own influence, and the powerful name of Henry Vane, prevailed with Miantonomoh, the chief of the Narragansetts, to obtain for them a gift of the beautiful island of Rhode Island. The spirit of the institutions established by this band of voluntary exiles, on the soil which they owed to the benevolence of the natives, was derived from natural justice; a social compact, signed after the manner of the precedent at New Plymouth, so often imitated in America, founded the government upon the basis of the universal consent of every inhabitant: the forms of the administration were

borrowed from the examples of the Jews. Coddington was elected judge in the new Israel; and the three elders were chosen as his assistants. The colony rested on the principle of intellectual liberty; philosophy itself could not have placed the right on a broader basis. The settlement prospered; and it became necessary to establish a constitution. It was therefore ordered by the whole body of freemen, and 'unanimously agreed upon, that the government, which this body politic doth attend unto in this island, and the jurisdiction thereof, in favor of our Prince, is a DEMOCRACIE, or popular government; that is to say, it is the power of the body of freemen orderly assembled, or major part of them, to make or constitute just Lawes, by which they will be regulated, and to depute from among themselves such ministers as shall see them faithfully executed between man and man.' 'It was further ordered, that none be accounted a delinquent for doctrine;' the law for 'liberty of conscience was perpetuated.' The little community was held together by the bonds of affection and freedom of opinion; benevolence was their rule; they trusted in the power of love to win the victory; and 'the signet for the state' was ordered to be 'a sheafe of arrows' with 'the motto AMOR VINCET OMNIA.'"—Vol. i. pp. 392, 393.

This points to the first home of true principles; and another extract will show some of their first struggles with growing aristocracy. Continues the same historian, "When Clarke, the pure and tolerant Baptist of Rhode Island, one of the happy few who succeed in acquiring an estate of beneficence and connecting the glory of their name with the liberty and happiness of a commonwealth, began to preach to a small audience in Lynn, he was seized by the civil officers. Being compelled to attend with the congregation, he expressed his aversion by a harmless indecorum, which would yet have been without excuse, had his presence been voluntary. He and his companions were tried, and condemned to pay a fine of twenty or thirty pounds; and Holmes, who refused to pay his fine, was whipped unmercifully.

“ Since a particular form of worship had become a part of the civil establishment, irreligion was now to be punished as a civil offence. The state was a model of Christ’s kingdom on earth ; treason against the civil government was treason against Christ ; and reciprocally, as the gospel had the right paramount, blasphemy, or what a jury should call blasphemy, was the highest offence in the catalogue of crimes. To deny any book of the Old or New Testament to be the written and infallible word of God, was punishable by fine or by stripes, and, in case of obstinacy, by exile or death. Absence from ‘ the ministry of the word ’ was punished by a fine.

“ By degrees the spirit of the establishment began to subvert the fundamental principles of Independency. The liberty of prophesying was refused, except the approbation of four elders, or of a county court, had been obtained. Remonstrance was useless. The union of church and state was fast corrupting both ; it mingled base ambition with the former ; it gave a false direction to the legislation of the latter. And at last the general court claimed for itself, for the council, and for any two organic churches, the right of silencing any person who was not as yet ordained. Thus rapidly did human nature display its power ! The creation of a national, uncompromising church led the Congregationalists of Massachusetts to the indulgence of the passions which had disgraced their English persecutors ; and Laud was justified by the men whom he had wronged.” — pp. 450, 451.

It is greatly to be deplored that Christianity has so often been crippled or despised by those who misunderstand its genius, or are too much blinded by bigotry to perceive its superiority over the religions it came to supersede. Judaism had its theocracy, and paganism its aristocracy of divinities circling the brow of Olympus ; but Christianity is encompassed and adorned only by one grand brotherhood, bound together by love, like the angels, and blended in republican equality, like flowers blossoming in Tempe’s vale. All the great gifts of God and nature bear the same marks, and are evidently designed for a common

benefit. The air is clearly free for all to breathe ; water pours abroad its currents of beauty and richness with undistinguished profusion ; and earth, with all the bounty of diversified soil, proffers the fruits of national fertility in proportion to the industry of every man. With wonder and admiration we contemplate the miracle of Christ, when, with five loaves and two fishes, he fed assembled thousands. Let the principles of his religion but preponderate among mankind, and that miracle will become perpetual ; the supply will outrun the demand, and wretchedness of every form be banished from earth. But no ; the poor must be made poorer, that the rich may become yet richer. Millions per annum must go to support sinecures and worse than useless luxuries, while the great masses inherit nothing but ignorance, servitude, and want. When will the opulent, the proud, and the pompous, learn that the code of the rights of property is destined to be modified at least by the rights of humanity ? The one is artificial, temporary, and often exceedingly oppressive ; the other is natural, universal, and immovable. The negro admires the skill of the white man ; he says that he makes every thing work. " He catches horse, makes him work ; catches nigger, makes him work ; catches smoke, makes him work." But the mighty, who are playing this imperial game, compelling humanity unceasingly to toil, should exercise Christ's law of mercy, or they will speedily learn, to their cost, that the workers are themselves becoming qualified to define their just rights and defend them. Over thrones, dominions, and powers, over whatever ancient bulwarks or modern prejudices may oppose to their advancement, truth and justice are marching to inevitable and speedy triumph. In tones most clear and exhilarating, God is speaking in the soul of the masses, telling each to realize all of which his energies are capable, and toward which his aspirations tend, recognizing no human master, and wearing no fetter on faculty or limb.

- We have said that aristocracy was the first foe of the church, has ever since been but a hypocritical friend at best,



and we now remark, thirdly, that it is a perpetual impediment and consummate disgrace.

There always has been something fiendish in absolute power, and in the mode with which ambitious worldlings have maligned the nature of Christianity, or attempted to pervert its use. For centuries after the primitive church was planted, this evil was the greatest which truth struggled to overcome. Tertullian, in his "Apology," (chap. xlv.,) has occasion to allude to this fact, and indirectly sketches a beautiful outline of what Christianity then was. Says he, "We pray for emperors, and for all officers in power, for the present state of the world, for peace, and for the delay of the final consummation. We unite to read the Scriptures, whence we derive, according to circumstances, the light and warning of which we have need. This divine word nourishes our faith, elevates our hope, confirms our confidence, establishes the bond of discipline, and inculcates its law. . . . Old men preside. They attain this honor, not by wealth, but by the popular suffrage offered to their well-known worth. Money has not the slightest influence in things pertaining to God. If there is found among us a kind of treasure, its source is pure, and no one has occasion to blush for having sold religion. Each one contributes a moderate sum every month, in such manner and amount as he pleases; there is no compulsion; the offerings are voluntary. This is the deposit of piety; it is never dissipated in festivals or in debauches, but is employed to relieve or bury the destitute, to nourish forsaken orphans, superannuated domestics, and those who have suffered shipwreck; and, if there are Christians condemned to the mines, held bound in prisons, or banished to islands, only for the cause of God, Religion expands her maternal solicitude in behalf of those who have confessed her before the world."

This shows, with every other form of testimony, that truth has much more to fear than to hope from unsanctified greatness. Her chief strength is in the attachment of the feeble whom she protects, and the law of righteousness upon which

she is based. Love is her great power, and the unlovely great are her chief impediment and disgrace, "without one glory sparkling in their eye, one triumph on their tongue." Christianity has been shorn of its best energies ever since it fell into the thralldom of aristocratic patronage, and wherever the masses have been prevented from selecting, at their own will, pious and philanthropic pastors to fill free pulpits, and station in every community a lover of justice, humanity, and God.

In the history of the past and observation of the present, we meet with artificial distinctions much oftener than the enjoyment of natural rights. Particular dignitaries domineer over and obscure our common nature. Autocrats and aristocrats, nobles and priests, are more frequently obtruded upon the general notice than men,—human beings made conscious of divinity within them, and acutely conscious of the worthlessness of all outward decorations, compared with what is treasured in their own souls. Man does not sufficiently value himself as man, but looks rather to the chance circumstances of blood, rank, or caste—unworthy prejudices, which obscure what we most need to know, the invaluable worth and immortal destiny of every human being.

To maintain arbitrary distinctions and power, there has been a frightful expenditure of money, blood, and human happiness. Says a distinguished English writer in relation to his own country, "We talk of education and institutions for the people: why, the country might have been covered with endowed schools, institutions, museums, libraries, picture and sculpture galleries. We might have brought the luxuries of life home to every village, and furnished the means of intellectual and artistical improvement and enjoyment to the entire population of these realms. Nor was it merely a waste of money, but of human life and happiness, which the principles of the Corresponding Society would have averted. During the long and bloody wars with France, men fell as thick as pounds were wasted, by hundreds of thousands and by millions. There was scarcely a stream which was not stained by British blood, how-

ever remote the country in which its waters flowed, — scarcely a soil which was not saturated and fertilized with the blood of our countrymen. And for what? To keep down freedom both abroad and at home; to arrest the course of the French revolution, and prevent the commencement of an English reformation. Not only is the loss of life to be considered, but also the sacrifice of human enjoyment and peace. Widows and orphans were made by wholesale; sorrow and suffering were spread over Europe; every department of trade and commerce was disturbed. There was, so to speak, almost an omnipresence of evil generated; bad passions, lashed into a fury of demoralization, spread from country to country, too often under the name of religion, by means of which it was attempted to establish over humanity the reign of the most demoniacal principles and practices. There was a fearful suspension of that regular career of improvement by which the human race, left to itself, would advance, a throwing back of the destinies of humanity, and, as far as human power extends, counteracting the purposes of divine Providence for the amelioration of the condition of mortals, and their gradual advancement towards a higher state of being. If the Corresponding Society had been successful, not only would external warfare have been prevented, but internal dissension likewise. The Irish rebellion of 1798 would not have taken place; the tremendous horrors of which have not yet been forgotten, and never will be until that country has every wrong redressed. Pitch-caps, floggings, triangles, and all the gross barbarities to which the inhabitants of that land were subjected by an insolent soldiery, — the recollection of which accumulated so much of horror and hatred around the name of Lord Castlereagh, that it could not be obliterated even by the death which he inflicted upon himself, — these would have been saved, and all the passions and collisions which have resulted from this state of things, and have spread so much derangement and confusion abroad in society since that time.”

The oppression suffered by the laboring classes at home is

equalled only by the miseries of those who are driven into wars abroad. Coleridge said of the first, —

“Those institutions of society which should condemn me to the necessity of twelve hours’ daily toil would make my soul a slave, and sink the rational being into the mere animal. It is a mockery of our fellow-creatures’ wrongs to call them equal in rights, when, by bitter compulsion of their wants, we make them inferior to us in all that can soften the heart or dignify the understanding.”

Upon this truthful text, Rev. Mr. Fox makes the following equally truthful remarks:—

“There are those who can bear well the amount of toil which Coleridge disclaims for himself, as likely to exercise such a crushing influence over his faculties. While there are a few who are subject to the *curse* — for such it is — of indolence, the great body of the people, most assuredly, are over-taxed in their labors; they have to wear out life, thought, sensation, and all the higher and better powers of our nature, in the mere exercise of muscular strength; they are doomed to a sort of engine mode of existence, having to fulfil their allotted task from day to day; and, however much medical men may be puzzled to say exactly what is the average measure of labor which is good for human beings, there can be no doubt, nor, I believe, is there any with scientific men themselves, that that measure is, in an immense multitude of cases, largely overpassed.

“The results of this system force themselves upon our notice. They evidence themselves in debilitated frames, prevailing epidemics, and shortened duration of life. Death, like a stern monitor, keeps his account-books well; he swells his numbers, and records with unerring pen the consequences of a deteriorated and oppressive condition of society; he points to nameless graves in the distance as the total and the end of all. If, in the struggle of the Scottish people with Episcopacy, they can now point to their distinguished martyrs and others who fell in the cause of religion or their country, — so numerous

that they were called upon to erect one gravestone to the memory of ten thousand martyrs, — why, excessive toil has also its records in graves without a tombstone, where lie the hundreds of thousands and the millions of martyrs to the imposition of labor too great for humanity to bear.”

To limit the blessings of education to the smallest possible number, and to monopolize its power for selfish purposes, is another form of craft practised by priests and aristocrats. “Their only real object is to render education subservient to the interests of certain wealthy and powerful classes; while that moral appreciation of its benefits, that earnest wish that humanity, wherever it exists, however lowly its condition, should have all the gladdening views and lofty aspirations which a wholesome training and guidance would bestow, is altogether thrown overboard, and the whole thing is sacrificed to a thirst of power, and a principle of sordidness.” Hence all the great universities are closed against those who will not first swear to stand by “the altar and the throne,” because unshackled republican students are, of all agencies, those which despotism has good reason most to fear. They would have subjects, not of right, but of sufferance — not of independence, but of charity — a sort of slaves who, like tame animals, should lick the hand that grudgingly feeds them, and obey the unquestioned biddings of their masters, upon whatever errand they may be sent. The first article in the creed of such dons is, that “whatever is is right,” and especially is it right that they themselves should be comfortably off, and care as little as possible about the unfortunate millions. Every child they produce to propagate their ignoble character and prejudices, is instructed in infancy to distinguish between a rich and poor relation, while he sucks in the absurdities of his catechism, receiving “all that the nurse and all the priest have taught,” as the ultimatum of truth and the only rule of life.

The crowning iniquity of aristocratic influence is found in the monopoly it aims to secure in secular and religious legislation. It is yet too true, in Europe and America, that “the

largest possessors of wealth have the greatest influence in the enactment of laws by which the people are taxed. Thus we find, as a consequence of this undue influence of property, that the whole round of taxation falls most hardly upon the poor, and those who have the least ability to pay. It is not upon large properties, immense estates, and great accumulations of wealth, that the burden of taxation ever falls with a pressure which can be felt for an instant; but the weight bears upon all the necessaries of life, taxing every thing which comes to the poor man, and making him pay without immediately seeing the hand of the tax-collector; but although the process is invisible to the eye of the oppressed individual, it is in reality plundering him of a large portion of his earnings. This is the result of legislation being exclusively in the hands of the money power, by which the taxation is thus imposed; instead of being, as it should be, in the possession of that moral power which would make realized property pay for its security and permanence — a tax which would scarcely be felt by the individual, and which is amply due from him as the amount of his insurance in the great office of social safety.

“The contest which is now going on between monopoly and free trade is another struggle of the same description. Here, indeed, it may be said that there is the money power on both sides; and that accumulation is the object of those who are striving for the one object, as well as for those who are fighting against its attainment. But there lies something deeper in the conflict than a mere struggle between two sections of the money power; there is a most vital elementary principle at stake — man’s right to what he earns, and to the greatest amount of good which his industry will produce in the world’s market — his liberty to buy, at the lowest price that he can, any of the commodities of which he stands in need. This is a question involving the natural right of the people, and which is not the less infringed for the interference being veiled under a variety of terms, and practised indirectly. It is, in

reality, the same thing as though that portion of his earnings which is abstracted in taxation, or by what is called 'protection,' was actually taken from him by force, and applied, against his own consent, to purposes in which he had no concern."

The only aristocracy worthy of our esteem is Nature's own. This is differenced from every factitious kind by two invariable marks; it is always practically useful to society, and never hereditary. Mere learning, wealth, and artificial honors, may be acquired mechanically; but the sons of their possessors are never born with their actual possession. At the advent of every child of Adam, in the hovel or palace, Nature presents herself before him with the eternal charter of human rights, declaring — *all are born free and equal*. But of the rightful inheritance belonging to all new-comers, false greatness seizes the lion's share, leaving to be doled out to the weaker classes only a few scraps and crumbs of privilege. If the possessors of more copious brain, heart, and living soul, work out the results which constitute the dignity of human nature, and the moral grandeur of either church or state, no thanks to fostering wealth or official patronage for their success. Solitary and unsympathized with in their lofty aspirations, they win a peaceful, honorable, and useful victory over the world, benefiting those whom they subdue by the majesty of their intrinsic worth, and raising them from the degradation of privileged classes, to the higher dignity of membership in a free state and republican church.

Monopolists are all of the same feather, and their influence is the same in every country and age. They are known by the positions they covet, as well as by the deeds they perform; as innocent birds build their nests in the grass, but birds of prey on domineering heights. The finest creatures of imagination, and the grandest masterpieces of inventive genius, are estimated by what they will contribute to personal aggrandizement, and not by their relation to the common

weal. "Discover what will destroy life, and you are a great man! what will prolong it, and you are an impostor! Discover some invention in machinery that will make the rich more rich, and the poor more poor, and they will build you a statue! Discover some mystery in art that would equalize physical disparities, and they will pull down their own houses to stone you."

The English aristocracy are, at this moment, greatly alarmed, as they have been for the last half century, in their conflict with republican France, and other abused neighbors. They profess to fight under the banner of Liberty; but the least informed can easily see that the only freedom they desire is to enjoy their own selfish privileges, which are endangered by every advance of liberal opinions and rational institutions. But liberty does not cease to be a great fact in the heart of humanity, and the most strengthening of its hopes, because the base, the cunning, and the tyrannical, are ready to offer mock incense on her altars, when about to murder Liberty's champions, and to transform into curses all which it is her prerogative to bestow. For instance, look at that beautiful and abused land, of which her noble son, Grattan, said long ago, "I found Ireland on her knees: I watched over her with an eternal solicitude: I have traced her progress from injuries to arms, and from arms to liberty." No: not yet to liberty quite, but justice to all oppressed people will yet come.

The common sense of mankind has declared Brahminism hostile to civilization, because it produces stagnation in the moral life, and perpetually limits the exercise of intellect. The influence of all feudal institutions is exactly the same. It is a system which has rendered but one good service to mankind—the example of individual will, displaying itself with the utmost energy in revolt against insufferable wrongs. The lesson prospered: in spite of the weakness of the serfs, and the prodigious inequality between them and the great proprietors, their lords, whole cities broke out in rebellion, and



began the battle of freedom for the world. Says Guizot, "It is difficult to fix a precise date to this great event—this general insurrection of the cities. The commencement of their enfranchisement is usually placed at the beginning of the eleventh century. But in all great events, how many unknown and disastrous efforts must have been made, before the successful one! Providence, upon all occasions, in order to accomplish its designs, is prodigal of courage, virtues, sacrifices—finally, of man; and it is only after a vast number of unknown attempts, apparently lost,—after a host of noble hearts have fallen into despair; convinced that their cause was lost,—that it triumphs. Such, no doubt, was the case in the struggle of the free cities. Doubtless in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, there were many attempts at resistance, many efforts made for freedom;—many attempts to escape from bondage, which not only were unsuccessful, but the remembrance of which, from their ill success, has remained without glory. Still we may rest assured that these attempts had a vast influence upon succeeding events: they kept alive and maintained the spirit of liberty—they prepared the great insurrection of the eleventh century."

The battle of the popular heart and will, against feudality, has never ceased; it is mightier and more successful now than ever before. In the days of Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, sumptuary laws were passed which allowed traders and artisans the use of meat at one meal only; even the rich were allowed only two courses and two sorts of viands, with the exception of barons and prelates, who were at liberty to devour as many kinds and as much as they pleased. But people in our day seem disposed to take the law-making and food-providing business into their own hands. In the grand final conflict, which every moment approaches a more deadly crisis, aristocrats in church and state will be the first to perish, according to the righteous ordinance of Heaven, that they who most outrageously invade the liberties of others shall first lose their own. The time has come when every man, deprived of

his lawful rights, will exclaim, as did Mirabeau, when expelled from the assembly of the nobles at Marseilles, "So perished the last of the Gracchi; but, before yielding up his life, he threw dust toward heaven, and from that dust Marius grew — Marius, less great as the exterminator of the Cimbri, than as the destroyer of patrician aristocracy at Rome." These words expressed the daring resolution of their author, which he lived to accomplish, and which enabled him to say on his death-bed, "I carry to my grave the shreds of the monarchy." So true is this that, although there have been a few royal puppets since, we hope Louis Philippe correctly said, in his recent flight, "I am the last king of France."

It is matter for devout acknowledgment that the Church of Christ, like every thing else really good, is progressive, and is destined to sweep away every obstacle, become as universal as the wants of our race, free as the dew and effulgence of heaven. She marches nearer and ever nearer to the infinite grandeur of the universe, and the perfect unity of its God. We are to look perpetually forward, and press toward the mark of our high calling, cultivating the conservatism, not of bigoted feudality, but of generous fraternity, holiness, and joy. Yesterday we cannot bring back; it is antiquated: our duty is to perform the duties of a better to-day, and anticipate a still more glorious to-morrow. Christianity must not be allowed to lag behind the other elements of civilization which it so much excels. Every new power that Science discovers, Religion hallows and consecrates to the widest advantage of all ranks, or they inevitably suffer together the greatest harm. True development is a constant growth from the past into the future, at every advance imbibing the mystic and mighty agencies by which the heart is purified, intellect enlarged, and the whole person fitted to serve God and man. As it is with individuals, so is it with the church as a whole. If it remains stationary a moment, incompetent to satisfy the religious wants, or grapple with the religious perils, of an era characterized by great social and political revolutions, then must it perish, or receive from

some new source immediate accessions of intelligence and force. Hence do we see modern Christianity, true to her mission of progress, gaining new vigor every day from innovators within her fold, who float more freely between habits of ancient submission, associations of bigoted attachment, and allegiance to revolutionary ideas.

All auspices indicate the dawn of a new era. Storms gather with irresistible might to sweep down thrones, disperse mitres, chastise aristocratic and priestly arrogance, awaken the masses to a sense of their capacities as well as their wrongs, and give stability to free institutions every where, by giving elevation of sentiment to all classes of mankind. Then rulers will understand that one of the best means of improving men is seasonably and generously to employ them; that the good of the laborer is to be regarded, as well as the profit to be derived from his toil. Then, too, it will be known that the vitality of Christianity is in itself, or rather in the will, precepts, and example of its divine Founder; not in arid creeds, sacerdotal despotisms, and hollow forms. True devotees, then, will be genteel and highly accomplished, not by an imprudent or effeminate unison with the tastes and customs of feudalism, ancient or modern, but by a profound and yet independent reverence for virtue, rather than rank; for worth, more than wealth. Should we live to enjoy the full splendors of that day, we shall have learned, beyond all present experience, that to be the servant of all is to command all; to give is to receive; to love is to be loved; to die is to live; that true happiness consists in the flowing out of our affections upon others, rather than the flowing in of their treasures or affections upon ourselves;—that dispersion, not accumulation; self-spending, not self-seeking; is the grand design of our earthly existence and its highest reward.

We have already seen that the first home of true religious freedom was in a few hearts among the first colonists of this western world. The Roman Catholics of Maryland, dreading the aggression of English bigotry, and profiting by Roger

Williams's wise liberality, on April 21, 1649, placed upon their statute-book the following noble act: "Whereas the enforcing of the conscience in matters of religion hath frequently fallen out to be of dangerous consequence in those commonwealths where it has been practised, and for the more quiet and peaceable government of this province, and the better to preserve mutual love and amity among the inhabitants, no person within this province, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall be any ways troubled, molested, or discountenanced, for his or her religion, or in the free exercise thereof." But notwithstanding these generous and Christian movements on the part of religionists who differed most widely in their tenets, their mutual foes in Massachusetts soon employed

"The skeptic's might, the crosier's pride,  
The shackle and the stake,"—

if not to mangle their flesh with the enginery of the most fiendish bigotry, to attempt what is worse, and "lock its hard fetters on the mind." Too soon for the peace and honor of that age, but not too speedily and outrageously for a warning to all time, and the ultimate disenthralment of all men from priestly and aristocratic domination, came the actors and their acts, celebrated by Whittier:—

"O, glorious days, when church and state  
Were wedded by your spiritual fathers!  
And on submissive shoulders sat  
Your Wilsons and your Cotton Mathers.

"Then wholesome laws relieved the church  
Of heretic and mischief-maker;  
And priest and bailiff joined in search,  
By turns, of Papist, Witch, and Quaker!

"The stocks were at each church's door;  
The gallows stood on Boston Common;  
A Papist's ears the pillory bore—  
The gallows-rope, a Quaker woman."

Who were the bold advocates of religious liberty in this country in her first struggles, and who have been her staunch friends every where ever since? Says the "New Englander," (not a Baptist magazine,) "Among them, in the providence of God, American Baptists seem to have been called to lead the van. In the report on the subject of European missions, which was adopted at the last meeting of the general convention in Philadelphia, American Baptists have put this testimony on record:—

"In Greece, the great practical value of our principle,—to recognize no national church, but to build up churches of spiritual Christians that shall be independent of the state, and independent of each other,—has been early and signally manifested. *To attempt to reform, by fraternization, the corrupt national churches of the East, is, we believe, a FRUITLESS EFFORT. We act on another principle. A church, composed only of hopeful converts, independent, and, as far as man governs it, self-governed, is our view of the New Testament polity, AND OUR SCHEME FOR MODERN MISSIONS.*'

"That is the American Baptists' stand. Be it theirs to maintain it every where, in good faith and entire. In doing so, let them, by prayer, sympathy, and succor, stand by their persecuted brethren in Germany and Denmark; let them encourage and uphold their suffering brethren in France, and if 'Protestant evangelists and colporteurs,' sustained, perchance, by American funds, make common cause with high-church 'Nationals,' in multiplying their afflictions and upholding the doctrine of state alliance and control, let them tell the story, as in the last report of their Board of Missions, to all the churches, and they will see that American Christians of other names will not send funds across the Atlantic, to help the vengeful bond woman to beget abortions, or to strangle at the birth the free babes of the free woman; just when her Lord, too, is saying, 'Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband.' Let

them, in the same spirit, bid their brethren in Greece be of good courage and fear not, both to preach and to baptize in the name of the Lord Jesus; and if those good brethren dare not do so, let American Baptists unite with the weak, and timid, and prudent of other faiths, and call home all Protestant missionaries from the East, 'to stay in Jericho till their beards be grown,' or other men are found, who, like Paul, will carry the gospel there, and bear themselves, in its propagation, in respect to civil relations and authorities, worthily of the gospel of Christ; or, like Christ, will be ready to obey unto death in the maintenance therein of his supremacy over all authorities, whether of heaven, earth, or hell."

This was published in July, 1845; and since then what has the same denomination done for civil and religious liberty in Asia, Africa, and Europe, especially in those grand fields of modern civilization — France and Germany?

We believe that nobler conflicts are yet to be fought, and ampler trophies won. Heaven has evidently predestined the Christian heroes of this age "to fight the battles of the future now," and woe be to him who is too imbecile or cowardly for the strife. The era has come when, as a redeeming and controlling agent, the days of expediency, priestly cunning, and aristocratic compulsion, are numbered, and henceforth not power, nor conventional morality, nor parasitical talent, but truth, simple, unshackled, and sublime, is the untaxed dowry of every Christian soul, and the only crowned monarch of all mankind. There is a luminary risen fairer and more extended than all other lights — even the word that was in the beginning; the all-blessing effulgence of the highest Heaven, of which solar beams are but the Shechinah and cloudy tabernacle; the blessed word that shines for all, and giveth eternal life to as many as seek to be transformed by his influence. He has offered himself, a divine atonement for the sins of the whole world, thus abolishing all lesser sacrifices, and destroying the functions of all other priests. He has taught us to call no man master, and in no way to create in others or ourselves the

degradation of a slave. He has planted on earth a sacred association of members every way equal to each other, and mutually esteemed; and this perfect model of republicanism, given to the world eighteen hundred years ago, Christ carefully isolated from kings and popes, bishops and priests; and that these four classes of tyrants may ever be deprived of their chief support, he would most zealously banish from the holy brotherhood every aristocrat.

## PART III.

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### THE REPUBLICAN INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

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“Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. . . . For who knows not that Truth is strong next to Almighty? She needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings, to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defences that Error uses against her power. Give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps.” — *Milton's Areopagitica.*

“If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated, where reason is left free to combat it.” — *Jefferson's Inaugural Address.*

“Croyez-vous que le lâche, qui traîne en tout lieu la chaîne de l'esclave, soit moins chargé que l'homme de courage qui porte les fers du prisonnier?” — *Paroles d'un Croyant.*

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

“And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.” — *Jesus Christ.*



## CHAPTER I.

### CHRISTIANITY THE SOLACE OF THE OBSCURE.

IN parts first and second of this work on Republican Christianity, we have portrayed the progressive character of Christ, and the spirit of the primitive church. It remains to discuss the republican influence of Christian doctrine; and our first duty will be to show that it is Heaven's best solace to hidden minds.

Under this general head, three points are to be discussed, as follows: Christianity arose in the deepest gloom; is designed to mitigate the keenest pangs; and pour solace upon the obscurest children of mankind.

First, it was in the deepest gloom that our holy religion arose to diffuse its light and blessedness all over earth. This is "the dayspring from on high, which has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." From the darkest night, the Sun of righteousness burst on our world with healing on his wings, light and joy for all. Christianity is not the religion of a sect or section, the tool of kings, popes, councils, hierarchies, synods, or creed-makers, but Heaven's own system of infallible truth and free salvation, with few doctrines necessary to be believed, and many duties necessary to be performed.

Human society is a natural condition, the state necessary for man; since without sociality man could neither reproduce nor preserve himself. Hence religion, without which social institutions cannot exist, is necessary as society itself, and cannot be a mere human invention. If our existence is

designed for some exalted end, as that of all beings, it is evident that the end designed cannot be attained but by the aid of revelation, which alone can give us positive information in relation to our nature, origin, and destiny, while it guaranties the possession of that which is supremely good and true. Christianity, as it is found in the New Testament, is "ordained to better and to beautify existence as it is;" a religion of love and saving grace, addressing itself to the head and to the heart; in harmony with the natural as well as moral world; and bringing to all the magnificent proofs of Deity without us, and the still more impressive proofs of Deity within us; a religion which is adapted to man's condition and wants every where, admitting no compromise with vice, making sincerity the test of sanctity, and practical benevolence the test of sincerity.

True religion is every way infinite, because it is all full of God. Between it and our faculties there is a perfect harmony; therefore, in all time, and in every place, man, naturally inclined to worship in some form, has felt the need of being enlightened by divine doctrines, consoled, vivified by lofty hopes, and conducted by unerring precepts. The more religion is pure, holy, and vigorous in its claims of truth and justice, the greater is its power over man, and the more is it conformed to his nature, despite the disasters of the fall. Hence, in every region of earth, Christianity has only to be proclaimed in purity to be universally heard. The follies and crimes of paganism, superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism, cannot long resist its influence, taint its spotless purity, nor prevent its diffusion even in the darkest corners of earth, where, as on the boldest heights, its prerogative is to create the "sun-minds that warm the world to love, and worship, and bright life."

The voice that cries, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," always resounds in the desert rather than in the garden, among the masses of the obscure, who pant for improvement, and not in the halls of the luxurious, already

satiated with ease. Christ has taught us not to seek him in a terrestrial paradise, but in the Nazareths of virtuous penury, the Bethanies of simple domestic joys, the Gethsemanes of agonizing prayer, on the Calvaries of martyrdom, and the Olivets of triumphal ascent from earthly sufferings to immortal joys. He who came down from the Father of lights, kindled the mild splendors of Christianity first in the most hidden vales, not that the more prominent should be left benighted, but that the most unfortunate should be especially blessed.

As the young eye of Christ opened upon the world he came to redeem, he every where saw vice and tyranny in the ascendant, crime and imposture ruling supreme. He had not made kings to destroy their fellow-men, nor priests to harness them, like brutes, to regal chariots, thus in the person of religionists giving to the world the basest example of pride, perfidy, and avarice, to debauch and destroy; but as he had built the universe to proclaim his power, so he came to enlighten and protect the feeblest of the rational creation, the most glorious manifestation of his mercy. It is in this respect, especially, that Christianity excels all preceding religions. It alone lays a pure basis, adapted to the community at large, inculcating the spirit of universal authority, and at the same time of such a character as to unite all hearts together, and bind them to God himself. This was an innovation upon all local systems, an overthrow of all contracted creeds, of which Plato, for instance, the wisest of uninspired reformers, never dreamed. Says he, "No man who has sense, whether he undertakes to erect a new state from the very foundation, or merely to restore an old one which has been broken down, will attempt to change those things relative to the gods and to sacred ceremonies which ought to be stable,—from whatever gods or demons they may have received their appellation. Nor should the legislator touch in any respect that which is founded upon the authority of the oracle, or upon sacred old sayings." We should infer from language like this that paganism, as religion, never rose to the full conception of the Divine, as something

holy, spiritual, individual, and superior to nature. Judaism, on the other hand, was an ethical, monotheistic religion, distinguishing God from the world, it is true, but, like preceding systems, leaving man more as a phantom of another state of being than as a social creature to be cultivated in this. The great difficulty was, that whilst paganism confused the ideas of the Divine and Human, of God and Nature, Judaism not merely *distinguished*, but *separated* them. Christ came to correct this fatal falsity of view, and placed the whole truth, unmutilated and unobscured, palpably before the eyes of all mankind. He taught and exemplified his teaching in his own wonderful person, that all true religion has both a divine and a human character. He showed from the nature of God, as Spirit and Love, that he should communicate himself to his creatures, even the most lowly, receive them into intercourse with himself, and impart to each some measure of the fulness of his own infinite blessedness. This is at once the origin and consummation of Christianity. "God reveals and communicates himself; man accepts this revelation, and enters into this communion. All genuine religion is therefore of divine origin. But this is only one side of the question; there is another, also of much importance. This divine message can be received by mankind only through means adapted to human capacities. Revelation has to work upon the human mind, with all the faculties and susceptibilities with which it has been endowed for this very purpose, and which constitute its rational character. Nor is this all. This mind, at whatever period revelation is communicated, must be in some particular stage of progress, and under some peculiar historical influences. Thus all true, living religion must have also a human form, an historical impress and character. But while this is the case with all religion, it is especially so with Christianity. No religion is at once so divine and so human, so creative and original, and at the same time so deeply and grandly historical, as this; and in none are the two elements so entirely and so indissolubly united. The grand ideas which form the basis of all religion are here

presented in their greatest perfection and simplicity; God manifests himself in a form wholly corresponding with his character, and imbued with his spirit; and this type of his perfections is a *man*, thinking, feeling, acting, and suffering; as a man, exemplifying every human quality in its entire simplicity and truth, condescending lovingly to the smallest human interests, and thus investing them with a divine glory. Viewed in this light, Christianity appears divine in its essence, human in its form; divine in its origin, human in its imbodiment and development. It possesses the full originality and independence of a new religious creation, such as could proceed only from an immediate divine impulse; and is yet in the fullest sense historical, bearing the most intimate relation to the whole previous training and progress of the human race. It appeared when the fulness of time was accomplished; it is entwined by a thousand threads with *reality*; and has been, ever since its first appearance in the world, so completely the moving spring of history, that we cannot but regard it as the germ of the higher development of humanity; while, superior both to reason and nature, it is at the same time the highest reason and the truest nature. For no reason could have invented, no reflection discovered, that which forms the central point of Christianity; the self-sacrifice made by divine love on the cross, for the sake of sinful humanity; and yet both recognize therein the only effectual means for the redemption and regeneration of humanity."

Christianity alone distinguishes between God and man without dividing, portraying the true characters of both, and realizing their perfect union in the person of its divine Author. It teaches the perfect holiness of God, but at the same time his infinite grace and condescension to our fallen race; the distinctly *human* nature of man, but also his divine origin and capacities. In this respect has our holy religion attained the end to which all previous systems vainly aspired, being the grand luminary of absolute, unchangeable Truth, into whose effulgence all the subordinate beams of imperfect systems are

sublimely merged. And it is the highest glory of "the day-spring from on high, which hath visited us," that it arose in the deepest gloom, on purpose to pour solace on the most obscure.

Secondly, Christianity is designed to mitigate the keenest pangs. All religion not intrinsically Christian is deficient in respect to the prime element of true morality — sympathy for hidden suffering. This was one of the fatal defects that prevailed in the morality of pagan antiquity. Apart from the fact, that it favored selfish principles mainly, and constituted merely a system of rules for sensual gratification, which rendered man a proud and obdurate being, it exerted no influence upon the great mass of the common people, and had no tender emotions to soothe the suffering poor. Its guardians satisfied themselves with disputing in their schools about certain abstract principles, and left the struggling people to their fate. All moral restraint and fraternal obligations derived their chief support from traditionary customs, dogmatical ceremonies, and mercenary maxims; and even this poor basis, always weak, was rendered still more insecure and pernicious by the prevalence of the most degrading superstition. But such dispositions, feelings, and moral habits, Christ came to extirpate, and to substitute in their place the most salutary laws of personal and social improvement. The feeble and unfortunate were no longer to be despised, but as brethren to be recognized and protected. Matrimony was to cease being a state for the male to exercise unjust dominion over the female, and keep her in miserable bondage. Every house was to become a temple, and every inhabitant, however humble and destitute, to be ennobled, improved, and consecrated to the service of God and mankind. Animated by the highest and purest mutual esteem, every family, neighborhood, and state was to become a venerable and beneficent whole, wherein all should be equals, and none abused. How desirable a consummation is this! Said Plato, "Could we create so close, tender, and cordial a connection between the citizens of a state, as to induce all to consider themselves as

relatives, as fathers, brothers, and sisters, then this whole state would constitute but a single family, be subjected to the most perfect regulations, and become the happiest republic that ever existed upon earth." What Athena's sage vainly hoped to accomplish by the feeble power of consanguinity, the obscure Teacher of Nazareth will accomplish through fraternal love and grace divine. By the legitimate influence of Christianity alone can the citizens of this world be united together in such a manner, that they will become harmonious members of the same body, and yield each other constant assistance, by laboring together for the common good, mutually participating in the cares of each, and tenderly mitigating the sorrows of all. Then will the rich and powerful search for those condemned by want and misfortune to dwell "in dead Hadæan shades," and from the deepest gloom agonized merit will emerge, "as of yore out of the grave rose God."

The proper excitement and beneficent use of our sympathies conduces powerfully to the best mental cultivation. Christianity is founded on this principle; for it is a central light, which imparts a proper tone to all surrounding objects, and is designed to pierce the obscurest depths, as well as adorn the loftiest heights, of society. Having the revelation of God's will and the example of Jesus Christ especially before us, we learn that correct believing and merciful acting, equally and perpetually combined, are indispensable to the formation of perfect moral worth.

"All declare

For what the Eternal Maker has ordained  
The powers of man : we feel within ourselves  
His energy divine: he tells the heart  
He meant, he made us to behold and love  
What he beholds and loves, the general orb  
Of life and being — to be great like him,  
Beneficent and active."

Novalis has beautifully said, that man stands with the visible universe in as various and incomprehensible relations as with

his fellow-men ; that, as it shows itself childlike to the child, and bends itself condescendingly to his childish heart, so does it appear godlike to divine men, and sound in harmony with the highest spirit. It is the strongest passion and highest delight of many in the lowest walks of human life, "nature's low tones and harmonies to hear — heard by the calm alone." To these tones, to these harmonic sympathies pervading all worlds, they possess the acutest sensibility, and by them are inspired with the loftiest aspirations. Their hearts shine through their native lowliness like live coals through ashes, and they instinctively soar on high to "search the golden-globed skies for deeds of grace." It is the prerogative of Christianity to succor, guide, and console such, and has planted disciples here below that light may issue from them to impart warmth and lustre to every needy soul. Thanks to its benign influence, there never need be winter in the spiritual regions most genial to tender minds, nor need sympathizing spirits ever be cut off from each other, and frost-bound by selfishness, but all may be fused everlastingly into one living whole by the breath of heavenly love. The great Teacher of universal brotherhood smiles down upon our race in common, teaching man every where to be merciful to his fellow-man, and, with the gentlest regards, wooing the obscure into the bland splendors of his presence, to "lift up their hearts, like grass blades to the sun."

Mental and moral cultivation has too often, hitherto, been a gift thrown into the lap of affluence alone ; but the doctrines of the cross would make it a garland twined round the brow of the poorest child of Adam, rendering him joyfully radiant, and bounding from the conquest of a thousand perils and pangs. Christianity aims to regenerate and perpetually improve the moral nature of the masses of the people, strowing her richest and most roseate blessings on the million victims whom remorseless Mammon has trampled under his all but omnipotent foot. It comes with cheering words and timely patronage to those whose hearts are wrinkled long before their brow, wasted



by worldly neglect, or broken by oppressive care, and plants therein healing joys and auspicious hopes

“More pure than dewdrops, Nature’s tears, which she  
Sheds in her own breast for the fair which die.”

In the life and lessons of Christ is traced the influence of those agencies given to mould and bless our world in all its unceasing process of creation and improvement. Until regeneration is perfect and universal, the first step will ever be regard for the feeble, and the last, martyrdom to the malignity of the powerful. In the mean while, humanity will not cease to march steadily upward toward perfection. Every step of progressive light and improvement, from the manger wherein virgin worth lays her poorest child, to the throne of ultimate and triumphant grandeur, Christ attends the race he came to console in the darkest hour, its Redeemer, illumination, and reward. Compelled as we are, by the necessities of our being, to look to the outward world for much of our comfort, and for no small share of our happiness, Christ would counsel us rather to look within our own bosoms for the best law, guidance, salvation, and God. With earnest love he transfers to his disciples the truths which the pangs of his earthly experience stamped on his innermost soul, and would have us never forget that whatever he draws as an illustration from his own nature has its counterpart in our nature, and that he suggests advice and inspires purposes divine in our hearts, in order that we may raise ourselves from the prostration of worldliness to soar to the infinite spiritualities of heaven. This ambition, so useful and pure, God most often kindles in the darkest and bleakest nooks of earth, prompting the sons of penury to joy in their fearful strife, “even as an eagle, nigh famished, in the fellowship of storms.” In these emergencies, wherewith talent is elicited and worth matured, success results only from an humble but firm resolve to be individual, a being girt with that unity of manhood and divinity that God designed. Such a purpose is not formed in moments of excitement and enthusiasm, to be

abandoned with the first ebbing of emotion ; neither is it a resolution barren of practical use in the world. It says, in all calmness, and with the utmost fixedness of will, " If no other man shall be found disposed to stand by my side through every vicissitude, I will be an unflinching hero to resist evil, delusion, and despotism, of every form." Such persons are imbued with deep-seated strength, won from fiercest elements, and which, like manna in the desert and wilderness, they can live upon, and, " spider-like, spin their web out any where." The purpose of their life is to improve mankind in general, and especially to encourage those who, like themselves, have known the direst struggles ; to show them the beauty of holiness, and urge them, by the most potent entreaty, to aspire to its possession ; to paint before the eye of their mind the ideal of progressive virtue, and to indicate the agencies by which individual perfectibility can best be attained ; to state and exemplify the renouncement, the self-denial, the martyr courage, the pertinacity, the unity of purpose, and earnestness of pursuit, by which men may best fulfil the end of their existence, best accomplish the will of their Creator, and shine with most healthful brightness over the wide ranks of their race. To such persons religion is not a frigid, stationary thing ; but, as soon as it has passed into the form of vital experience, its progress is thenceforth illimitable and its influence unbounded. As sympathy threw them, when sorrowing, on the Invisible and Immutable, and, in all their subsequent career, conducts them to the same infinite sources of light and strength, when all around their dimmed eyes and yearning heart the visible is dark and troubled, so do they delight most, in every interval of their own bitter strifes, to search out the still worse conditioned, and relieve their woes. They know full well how slight an act may raise or sink a soul, and multiply, in the most desponding, those serener and sublimer moments which convey the spirit away through the gate of devotion to the throne of the Infinite, where the poorest are most bountifully enriched, and the proud-

est honors of earth appear less valuable, as well as more transient, than summer dust.

The truth as it is in Jesus of Nazareth, the victim of oppression and patron of the obscure, exalts, consoles, and raises us above the sphere of ordinary suffering, chases despair from anguish, restores to us "the loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead," pours into minds the most deeply hurt the most healing balm, ministers to the loftiest hope, and awakens those imaginings which "bring all heaven before our eyes." The sincere teachers of this truth will not tarry on their errands of mercy because of the rain and wind, nor will they wait until the day shall break, when tyrants are crushing their victim, demons are impatient for their prey, and an expiring sinner may be saved from eternal woe. When man, loving and serving his fellow-man, the most wretched even, goes forth in the tempestuous midnight, ascends wintry hills, traverses the pathless wilderness, till, faint, cold, and dripping, he at length reaches the hovel of deserted and tortured humanity, with what a gasping of inarticulate gratitude, interpreted most strongly in smiles mantling the cheek of agony, is his coming welcomed! There are thousands of such abodes, which, but for the tender mercies of Christianity, would never be lighted up with a single ray of health or hope. Most persons, like Tacitus, delight to portray the corruptions of their fellow-men, without once attempting either to reform or alleviate them. Instead of making human culture as universal as heavenly light, the influence of redemption coëxtensive with the disasters of the fall, the selfish would forbid the sun to shine beyond the boundaries of their own useless domain, and concentrate their intrinsic meanness to the violent enforcement only of their own bigoted creed. If pure and promising talents start up in humble shades, like rosebuds peeping out of snow, these trampers on the best hopes of mankind will stamp down their first unfoldings, or leave them to freeze beyond all power of further growth. But not so would Christ have us deal with those who are in danger of abiding in a perpetual Cimmerian sojourn; he directs each

struggling plant of humanity to be brought out into a genial, salubrious air, not mutilated by tyranny nor chilled by neglect. Each congealed sensibility would the Savior gently loosen with the soft breath of love, and each incipient faculty would be energized with power undying, that he might transform the most hidden heart into a perennial fountain, "flinging its bright, fresh feelings up to the skies it loves and strives to reach."

The noblest are always the most tolerant, the basest the most arrogant, and the most deserving the most uncomplaining. We often have occasion to remark, with an early Greek father, that "it is the rich and prosperous who condemn Providence, in affected pity for the sufferings of innocence." Said Bernardin de Saint Pierre, "It is from the midst of voluptuous prosperity that these murmurs against Providence issue. It is from these libraries, so filled with light, that the clouds rise up which have obscured the hopes and virtues of Europe." "It is not Lazarus," says St. Chrysostom, "that pronounces such blasphemy. He would have shuddered at the thought of it. Is it not revolting, then, that, while those whom God has visited with all kinds of misery, bless him and give him thanks, you, who are only bare spectators of the combat of humanity with suffering, should thus blaspheme against Providence? For, if the sufferer should for a moment give way to grief, and utter some guilty words, there would seem to be some excuse for him; but that another, who is a stranger to the sorrows of life, should lose his soul and outrage his Creator, condemning things which are regarded by those who endure them as benefits, and a subject of gratitude, this certainly is inconceivable, and undeserving of pardon."

Sincere Christians are the most uncomplaining, however great the sufferings they endure, because they are most conscious of their own demerits and the unspeakable mercy of God. If their good deeds are calumniated, their integrity denied, or their faults exaggerated, they inflict on their foes nothing but tears of sorrow; for their heart tells them to set against the unjust treatment they receive on earth the boundless rewards

laid up for them in heaven. The lone pilgrim who journeys, it may be with tender feet and feeble limbs, along the gloomiest vales of life, remembers that He who built the universe, and possessed all treasures within himself, was, on earth, more destitute and despised than all the children of men, yet bore in his youthful bosom a heart forever swelling with inexhaustible compassion, which finally broke on the cross, when, in the hour of dark despair, he stretched out his arms to embrace and bless a world redeemed.

Thirdly, Christianity not only arose in the deepest gloom, and is designed to mitigate the keenest pangs, but, in harmony with its origin and first experience, it also pours solace upon the obscurest children of mankind.

Christ inculcated nothing with more earnestness than a belief in the universal and impartial love of the Father of all, which is extended even to the feeblest fowls of heaven. He incessantly labored to place the wretched in an attractive light, and cause them to be approached with feelings of benevolence and esteem. He portrayed, in brilliant and fascinating terms, the alacrity with which God pardons the vicious and wandering, as soon as they repent and reform. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 11—32) in the most touching and beautiful manner applies this truth to the heathen nations, and represents them, after a long wandering, as returning and again received into their Father's house. In order to inspire the proud and domineering ranks of his countrymen with merciful dispositions toward their fellow-men, Christ employs the strongest and most vivid colors to represent the exalted worth of human nature, and shows them that it ought to be respected in the smallest child even, and the meanest slave. His most distinct command was to love all mankind, which obligation, on our part, he grounded upon the universal love of the Father in heaven, who makes his sun to shine equally upon all nations, and sends his rain as plentifully upon those who are most benighted or deformed by vice, as upon those who are decorated with the fairest virtues. The neighbor to be loved as one's

self was every man without exception ; and, by thus representing love to the weakest and most unworthy of mankind in connection with love to the Almighty Father in heaven, as the substance of all morality, our Lord entirely and forever abolished all party considerations in respect to distinction of family, rank, nation, and religion. He would have each rational creature, in his appropriate sphere, fostered with the tenderest regard, that each succeeding day he may possess more of mind and freedom than he ever had.

In a strain of ineffable melody do we hear resounding on the wide air, from the sacred mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Blessed the poor! Ah, how unlike to this were the wisdom and demeanor of pagan antiquity! Said the great Stagirite, "We fear all evil things, such as the loss of fame, poverty, sickness, friendlessness, and death." The Athenian, with Plato, would make a law in every state to this effect—"Let there be no poor person in the city; let such a person be banished from the cities, and from the forum, and from the country fields, that the country may be altogether pure and free from an animal of this kind." In short, for four thousand years poverty was looked upon as a dreadful evil, a sign of malediction; and, where true Christianity does not predominate, the same sentiments continue to maintain their ground among men, and impel them to ungenerous deeds. The children of penury and misfortune, however richly they may be endowed, are still regarded as those vile animals against whom the Grecian legislator proposed to make laws, banishing them from every place of public resort, that the more favored might not be annoyed by their presence, and even rural seclusion be cleared of their contaminating touch.

All vitiated forms of Christianity, patronized and enforced by the head of the state, by princes, nobles, magistrates, and hierarchies of every form, descend slowly into the lower ranks, and do little or no popular good. But the great Founder of the true church took exactly the opposite course; he himself was born and began his divine mission among the plebeian

classes, the poor and ignorant, and the power of faith ascended rapidly into the higher classes, reaching at length the imperial throne. The two impressions of these two origins of religious belief have remained distinct on their respective classes, manifested in the magnanimous zeal of one and the bigoted mummery of the other. The great masses hail the advent of the first, and are blest by their influence; while to the exclusive arrogance of the latter, contracted aristocratic circles always furnish the most favorable soil. So little alive are they to the natural inference from this palpable and disgraceful fact, that in magnifying national, religious, and pharisaical creeds, they always boast of their wonderful effects in giving a dignified tone to high society, the monopoly of literary elegance to a clique, or in contributing to some worldly advantage, which by special grace should belong alone to the ranks above the poor. There is in truth always a secret tendency in the higher walks of life, where pride and affluence reign, to despise the company of the shepherds of Bethlehem, who were the first to believe, as well as to scorn treading in the steps of those fishermen who were the first to obey. But it would be well for all to remember what St. Jerome, the hermit of Bethlehem, in the fourth century said: "The apostles have written, and our Lord himself has spoken in the Gospels, not that a few merely, but that all, should understand. Plato wrote, but he wrote for a small number, and not for the nations. Scarcely three men understood him. But these, that is, the princes of the church and of Christ, have written, not for a few, but for ALL MEN."

Christ appeared on earth invested with sublime and holy doctrines, which he labored to impart, not to sects and sectaries, but to *universal man*. He taught with a completeness of wisdom and love that contemplated all those laws which regulate our sublunary career, often so stormy, but over which never ceases to gleam the rainbow of hope. He had a vivid personal experience of all the delicate sensibilities that melt and trickle around the heartstrings of the obscurest bosom, as streams of pearl flow darkly beneath the mighty mountains;

and this same great patron of trembling merit, who remotely read the better desires of Nathaniel when under the fig-tree, says to each obscure youth panting to arise and shine, —

“I saw thy secret longings — unsaid thoughts,  
Which prey upon the breast like night-fires on  
A heath.”

The redeemer who goes forth to bless this world, must be a prophet to arouse and encourage, rather than a philosopher to dogmatize and confound; one speaking to our spiritual intuitions more acutely than to our mental speculations — aiming at the diffusion of universal light, as the means of securing individual rights and promoting perpetual progression. Thus Jesus came — divinity veiled under the luminous shadow of immaculate humanity, which combination garnered within itself the suggestive and stimulative power of all the genius in the universe, to kindle and feed the purest flames in the most secluded bosoms. His interest in the beneficiaries whom it is his highest joy to solace, is not fitful and brief, but rooted in the eternal substance of his glorified being, and always prompted, by the sublime faithfulness of Godhead, to elevate and ennoble the profoundest emotions that ever struggle in the otherwise disconsolate heart of man. Christ can sympathize with those whose backs are lacerated with the injustice, and whose eyes are dimmed with the tears extorted by those who, instead of gazing on benighted and abused humanity with compassion, rend it in pieces, and throw away the palpitating flesh, in order to fit the reeking bones into an arbitrary system, to which, for yet longer cycles of agonized years, they would condemn, the great multitudes of toiling men. These are the unfortunate offspring of obscure destiny, who plod on their weary way, as stars wear through the night, fair in their nature, though remote from brighter spheres, and scarcely seen by the common eye. But He who at evening was admitted to no hospitable home in the metropolis wherein all day he had toiled, and walked wearily to Bethany to repose on a rustic couch,



regards all who labor unrequitedly with heart, hand, and brain, for the public good; else would their prospects be blank indeed, as the blue skies when the sun is gone. He is forever the solace of the injured and obscure, lingering yet on earth by the energies of his spirit, to make every aspiring child first a hero, then a sage, then a saint, partaking of the divine nature, and breathing holy and elevating influences all around. As the good, the true, and the lovely, are an harmonious unity in God, and an harmonious unity in the universe, so would Christ make them an harmonious unity in every son of man. Since man is a perfectible being, he is, from every low gradation of existence, to be urged upward, by the radiance of perfect righteousness, from one height of excellence to another, till he shall be filled with all the fulness of God. Every human creature that struggles into existence, even in the lowest vale of life, is to be looked upon as the child of the Infinite and the Divine, gifted with latent energies, that may be taught to swell with unbounded progress, and yearn into the deep bosom of immensity. Who can be indifferent to the condition and destiny of the obscurest among such creatures? Who would not emancipate them from every bond, awaken them from every lifeless formula, and cheer them gladly on the way to bliss? And, to this end, who would not pray,—

“Let them not

Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms  
For bread, but have some space to think and feel,  
Like moral and immortal creatures”?

Too many religionists are mere compounds of intolerance and indifference. Where, as it respects their fellow-creatures, they should be most strenuously active, full of discriminating zeal, dispensing generous blessings, there it is precisely that the eye is blind, the ear deaf, the hand shut, and the heart cold. Christianity teaches them to rise above sectarian considerations, and do good to all men for their own and the blessed Redeemer's sake. This they are too mercenary or too indo-

lent to do ; but where they have no right whatever to interfere, and where their bigoted meddling can produce only mischief and misery, there it is they most pertinaciously obtrude themselves, and degrade all they touch. If their poor forsaken brother is dying in the next street, on a pallet of straw, famished, diseased, and almost driven by sheer neglect to despair, they hasten not to relieve the wants of his body, or soothe the pangs of his soul, but leave him to fight out the fierce last fight with the grim destroyer as best he can. If you direct their attention to the ignorance, crime, and misery of the community, some of which can be removed by social action, and much more by private benevolence, and ask them to put their hand to the holy work of diffusing light, purity, and happiness, they shrug their shoulders, and reply, that they have enough to do to mind their own affairs, and it is a shame there are so many wretched creatures in the world. It is in vain that millions pine and perish on every hand. It is in vain that the captive longs for deliverance, that the heel of tyranny is on the neck of the feeble, and the lash resounds on the back of the enslaved. It is in vain that abused and exasperated outcasts darkly grope for instruction and compassion, till, goaded to madness by starvation, they violate laws the moral propriety of which they have never learned, and are hurried by judicial martyrdom to the consummation of inhuman abuse. As they have lived uncared for by the large majority of those classes to whom fortune has been more merciful, so they die the objects of their profoundest contempt.

Some of the Roman emperors hung their laws so high on brazen pillars that the people could not read them, and then punished those as offenders who knew not a description of their offence. But no exalted philanthropists of our day of augmented light, and in this country of freer institutions, would do this, except such as either contentedly hold or would create slaves. If one who is a tyrant at heart does not find men already brutish enough for his brutal purposes, he will strive most successfully to complete the degradation of his victims

by excluding divine light from their minds. Christ's command to "teach all nations," he practically nullifies; and since all who are saved are rescued by lessons, and not miracles, he forecloses the redemption of the poor, and with fiendish triumph seals their eternal doom.

In the obscurest walks of life may be found many a youth richly endowed with latent germs of greatness, who continually exclaim to themselves, in shrinking sadness, "O, I feel like a seed in the cold earth, quickening at heart, and pining for the air!" To whom can such look for appreciating sympathy and appropriate aid but to those who really possess and practically exemplify the spirit of Christ?

"The wild flowers' tendril, proof of feebleness,  
Proves strength; and so we fling our feelings out,  
The tendrils of the heart, to bear us up."

And none comes quicker to our solace and support than He whose heart most yearned over a suffering world, and was pierced to redeem it from eternal woe. The thought of ameliorating the condition of mankind inspired and fortified the great Redeemer in planting his doctrines on earth; and his only direction to his disciples is to love all, and perpetually to advance. The institution of Christianity is designed to purify our hearts and regulate our demeanor by the love of God. In the practical accounts of the proceedings of the last day, given in the Scriptures, the excellency which is represented as being a criterion and distinguishing feature of the disciple of Christ, and which He will acknowledge, is Christian benevolence—love to man manifested in the relief of the poor. The apostle John has given us a most sublime description of the beneficence of God, when he says, "God is love." Love is not so much an attribute of his nature as his *very essence*—the spirit of himself. Christian benevolence is the imitation of Christ; and just so far as we possess his spirit, and exemplify his character, we bear the image of God, and are his sons indeed.

But few can enter the more exalted sanctuaries of earthly

wisdom : Christ, to meet the emergency, has richly endowed the highest school of the most generous instruction, and thrown open its portals wide as the world. He proffers to every one of the most benighted and destitute among the children of men a handful of eternal truth, and bids them make a heartful of it. Christ won the emancipation of our race from the worst bondage by the sacrifice of himself, and has transmitted the privilege and duty of universal education, with all the other inestimable blessings connected with the patrimony of his blood. His lessons are most abundant, better understood, and best enjoyed by the most needy and deserving — the inheritors of genius obscured, who gather truth from trials, “like snow from clouds, the most, and whitest, from the darkest.”

The true Christian, who is instructed properly with respect to the nature of the soul and its fearful destiny, will love *man* as *man*, and be interested in him, whatever may be his rank and wherever he may dwell. The bounds of family complexion and country cannot confine him. In whatever form human nature puts forth its energies, he delights to contemplate them, and feels a brother's solicitude to promote their happiest growth. Says Channing, “Christianity lays the foundation of a universal love, by revealing to us the greatness of that nature in which all men participate ; by inspiring reverence for the human soul, be that soul lodged wherever it may ; by teaching us that all the outward distinctions of birth, rank, wealth, honor, which human pride foolishly swells into importance, and which separate different classes from each other, as if they were different races, are not worthy to be named in comparison with those essential faculties and affections which the poorest and most unprosperous derive as liberally from God as those who disdain them. Christian love is founded on the grandeur of man's nature, its likeness to God, its immortality, its powers of endless progress, — on the end for which it is created, of living forever, diffusing itself illimitably, and enjoying God and the universe through eternity. He who has never looked through man's outward condition, through the

accidental trappings of fortune and fashion, to the naked soul, and there seen God's image commanding reverence and a spiritual grandeur which turns to littleness all that is most glorious in nature, — such a man may have kindness, for of this he cannot easily divest himself; but he is a stranger to the distinctive love of Christianity, and knows nothing of the intense-ness and diffusiveness with which the heart can bind itself to the human race."

It is matter calling for deep gratitude on the part of all who desire the best welfare of mankind, that the doctrine of brotherhood, first announced and exemplified by Christ, is coming more and more to occupy and illuminate the highest, as well as the lowest, ranks of humanity. In the beginning, the cross rose above all, and there must it remain. For, if the principle of fraternity thence emanating is either forgotten or betrayed, all hearts are injured and every thing luminous in religion is obscured. Thank God, imperishable and adored, the sign for eighteen centuries has saved from oblivion the thing signified; and, destined still to raise its blood-stained arms aloft until the world shall cease, the cross will continue to rebuke the treachery of tyrants, and cheer all the abused.

"Star unto star speaks light, and world to world  
Repeats the password of the universe  
To God — the name of Christ; the one great word  
Well worth all languages in earth or heaven."

The Savior of the world never sanctioned that narrow bigotry which would confine the soul in some one particular department of moral culture, but opened many mansions of glory, at once the infinitely varied field of its excursions and reward. Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching upward to the things that are before, the devotee whom the best friend has rescued from the deepest gloom is eternally to soar with wider views and purer joys, verifying, at each advance, that "in the garden of his Master there are many kinds of flowers." It is not the true disciple who has had this experience, and tasted these delights, but spurious Christians,

who would monopolize all high culture among a few luxurious favorites, and leave the great masses of industrious poor to ignorance, superstition, and loathsome vice. To do this, is to outstrip the heathen in obdurate cruelty, for they had household gods who were patrons of all the oppressed. Coriolanus, after having laid waste the country of the Volscians, felt himself free and secure by the hearth of Aufidius, under the protection of the *penates*, or household gods of his enemy; while here, in this Christian and republican land, unoffending children are born slaves, ignorance is plead as the only safety of tyrants, and persecution is the penalty which sympathizing benevolence is sure to meet. O, it is time this foul blot were removed, this most bigoted and disgraceful spirit become extinct. Until such improvement transpires, Christianity will continue to appear sadly obscured, like the sun when belts of clouds hide half his burning disk.

The needed reform will shortly come. All moral truth, as well as scientific, is learning to work for the millions rather than for aristocratic cliques. Assuming numerous forms, both powerful and salutary, free thought will drive oppressive toil from the earth, and become the one grand laborer, the slave and drudge to mitigate the weariness of universal man. Science, guided by religion and subordinated to the highest ends, will create means of existence and enjoyment for myriads more than now breathe the air of true liberty; will people earth all over with MEN, instead of clods in the field, fops in the parlor, or machines in the factory; men, with industrious leisure, intelligent feeling, and holy hope, who will recognize the equality under which we are made to exist, and the heaven to which we should all aspire.

But, before this auspicious day arrives, it will be necessary for secular and religious tyrants to remove the splendid pinnacles falsely called the "pillars of the church;" hierarchies and arrogant aristocrats must take down the golden dome of special privilege, which has already become too ponderous, and begins to totter over their heads; they must take down the

gorgeous mass of hollow ceremony and priestly despotism which never belonged to the Christian order, if they would save any portion of the sacred edifice, which such deceptive corruptions have always endangered and never adorned, or an unexpected concussion will speedily lay the hypocritical time-servers and their desecrated altars together in ruins. The affluent, the powerful, and the proudly great by the accident of birth or ignominious adventure, must stand aside, that the honest though obscure peasant may come forward,

“ His rights to scan,  
And learn to venerate himself as man.”

The voluntary association of a truly Christian brotherhood, where each one enters and retires freely, seeking individual enjoyment only in the general welfare, according to the simple conditions determined by one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, is the most efficacious alleviation, if not cure, of the three grand evils of this world — penury, bondage, and corruption. The church, from the morrow of Pentecost, has loudly proclaimed this; she founded among the first disciples a voluntary community of the blessings of life; and hypocrisy was struck dead, when it first attempted to corrupt the primitive law of benevolence. Since then, for eighteen centuries, Christianity has not failed to inculcate a tender regard for the happiness of all, and especial solicitude for the most obscure and needy. The union of all ranks and conditions, for the purpose of mutual protection and sanctification, has ever been her motto, as the world has taken for its motto to divide and subjugate.

The only force Jesus Christ employs to propagate equitable and saving doctrine is himself; that profound force, the sure possession of an immortal essence, which he brought with him from eternity to diffuse all through the diversified ranks of mankind. He knew that the truth he inculcated, all simple as it was in form and substance, was the way, the truth, and the life; and this he sowed profusely wherever he went, as the sower scatters wheat. The Christian husbandman has no need of worldly policy, force, recondite science, philosophical mys-

tery, or cunning skill; he has the wheat of the word, earth and heaven, and he opens wide his hand to sow the seed of life. While human policy advances with her train and disappears, force antagonizes with force, science exhausts science, the philosophy of to-day supersedes the philosophy of yesterday, and subtle craftiness is captured in her own net; the wheat falls from the hand of God into the hand of man, and from the hand of man into the bosom of earth, whence the germs spring, grow, and ripen; humanity gathers the precious harvest with joy, partakes with rejoicing appetite, and soon attains strength to comprehend the most invigorating principles and defend the highest rights. Thus did Jesus Christ; and thus proceeds every one who sincerely holds to the truth as it is in God. He first comprehends the worth of truth by experiencing its power in his own soul, then diffuses it as widely as possible, and the world, *which is the field*, at length blooms with the fragrance and fruitfulness of heaven.

Christ smote the popular heart with the concentrated influence of infinite attributes, melted it into penitence, transformed it into adoring love, and filled it with expanding joys. He taught the multitudes that they had a God and Father in heaven; and thenceforth humanity, however abased and sorrowful, raised its joined hands to the skies, and, in beseeching God to relieve present miseries, felt the dignity and consolation which thence descend. The people have a God, not only in heaven, but nearer to themselves; a God who was made mortal and poor, born in a stable, cradled on straw, and who suffered more in all his life than any man. The people have a God, not only in heaven, not only in kindred flesh and poverty, but there is a God upon the very cross the great masses are compelled to bear, a living and triumphant God, to teach, defend, save, and console them.

Christianity, in its primary lessons, inculcates the principle of equality among men in the presence of God, which principle necessarily generates another, which is but the development or application of this, namely, the equality of men among



themselves, or social equality; for, if there exists, under this relation, an inequality essential and radical relative to justice, this inequality will render them primarily unequal before God. Religious equality tends, then, to produce, as its consequence and ultimate result, political and civil inequality. Now, civil equality has liberty for its form, for it excludes originally all power of man over man, and obliges him thenceforth to conceive temporal society under the idea of unconstrained association, which has for its end to guaranty the rights of each of its members, that is to say again, his freedom and native independence. Thus the freest and most salutary culture is secured by that religion which Christ came to establish, and which every way works a beneficial influence on the mind and destiny of even the obscurest of mankind. Says Hieremias, "In youth, in health, and prosperity, it awakens feelings of gratitude and sublime love, and purifies at the same time that it exalts; but it is in misfortune, in sickness, in age, that its effects are most truly and beneficially felt, when submission in faith, and humble trust in the divine will, from duties become pleasures, undecaying sources of consolation; then it creates powers which were believed to be extinct, and gives a freshness to the mind which was supposed to have passed away forever, but which is now renovated as an immortal hope." These mercies Christ bought for the poor, deserted, and disconsolate every where. Let us appreciate the blessings conferred on ourselves, and deprive no one, not the weakest and most obscure, of the slightest mercy designed for all. Like Christ, let us seek with tender solicitude to pour solace upon the obscurest children of mankind; and, to do this effectually,

"O, pray for those who in the world's dark womb  
Are bound, who know not yet their Father, God."

## CHAPTER II.

### CHRISTIANITY THE PATRON OF THE ASPIRING.

THE following positions mark the outline of the present discussion. Christianity was proudly contemned, when most pure; is adapted to encourage the deserving, when most depressed; and patronize all aspirations that are both free and grand.

In the first place, Christianity, in the immaculate purity of its unoffending youth, was treated by worldly greatness with chilling indifference and overbearing contempt. It was almost impossible for the insolent cliques of the day to suppose that any good thing could come out of Nazareth—a country town—a rural hamlet, away from the pollutions of their own bigoted and degraded metropolis. They were too dull to perceive, or too supercilious to confess, that in all ages of the world not one strong intellect, brilliant genius, generous redeemer, in a hundred, is ever born in a great city, garnished with ostentatious wealth and enervated with effeminate ease. Pride and intolerance were the mighty passions Christ first encountered, and towards which he ever remained the most unyielding foe. He gave no quarter to the mental oppression of the Scribes and Pharisees, and looked down with pity upon the great buildings, the palaces of affluence and power, amidst which deserving merit wanders unnoticed, and innocent genius too often goes weeping and bleeding from the humblest cradle to the most ignominious death.

All true greatness is invariably born in the sphere of industrious seclusion, and is there nourished from the beginning with that chastity of heart which loves God supremely. It

scarcely ceases to draw the elements of loveliness and strength from the purest source in the calm gladness of domestic joy, than it turns to ruder and bolder scenes, where it pants "for fresher growth and for intenser day." But what encouragement does the young heart meet? Who hails with discriminating eye and cheering tones the advent of a new hero, the dim but auspicious auroras of a bright and beneficent mind? Shepherds with their lowly flocks, or, perchance, a few wise men, bring offerings that attest their appreciation of the newcomer, and foster his worth; but the majority who bask in the profuse bounties of Providence, and too often pervert the blessings they have received, are busy in suffocating the best energies of their own offspring with costly luxuries, while they leave true worth to groan in unmitigated want, saturated with the cold dew of darkness, and bound in the chains of undeserved contempt.

These are the baleful influences which at every age are most suicidal to meditation, the sister and mother of genius. They are most fatal when brought to bear on youth, as the frost is most destructive in spring. Nothing is more sacred than the first reveries of a young soul, and nothing should be more kindly treated, since their issues are unbounded and eternal. A dreaming infant is the prelude to a thinking man, in whom love may become the mightiest inspiration, and thought all but omnipotence. Profound and aspiring meditation gave Milton heaven, Dante hell, Michael Angelo the Sistine Chapel, Columbus a new hemisphere, Herschel unnumbered worlds, Paul visions of unclouded, unmeasured, and eternal glory. Thoughts that may become the architects of noblest grandeur, limners of greatest beauty, moulders of sublimest worth, usually originate under the most rustic costume; as to the unreflecting, an apparently loathsome worm prepares for its perfection while it creeps in the dust, and at length bursts from its silken tomb with newly developed form, nature, and aspirations. Like a "winged flower," with brilliant and delicate pinions, and decked with the richest

gems, it gladly soars with the light, and sips nectar from the hand of God. In this image of the butterfly, first sluggish in the grub, then dormant in the chrysalis, and finally vitalized with a free and happy existence, amidst loveliest flowers or in loftiest light, the ancients saw a striking illustration of mental progress and immortality. What they felt in their conscience, they imbodyed in the consummate excellence of plastic art, and gave us in the Apollo of Grecian intellect when he gazed in triumph on the smitten Python. "We seem to see in this statue the visible idea or image of the man who aspired to be a god. At length he stands triumphant over the temptation and the tempter, content in the consciousness of a renovated and perfect humanity. Passion and intellect are blended in calm unison; knowledge and affection are at peace; the attributes of feeling, thought, and action, are combined in one attitude, expressive of the delicate might of a living spirit. The mind reigns in that body. The incarnate intelligence manifestly controls matter by his will, and appears as if conscious of being always resisted, yet never vanquished; but, inspired by the apprehension of his right, as vicegerent of Almightyness, he subdues resistance and surmounts difficulties by perseverance in the use of strength, that continually and spontaneously increases with every opposition to his purpose. Such is man, when sustained by the divinity which stirs within him; the only creature on which the Creator has shadowed divine perfections, and therefore he is to be honored even in his ruin; for when his affections and faculties are restored, as they may be, to divine sympathy, he shall again stand upright, the conqueror of the mighty serpent."

The tyrants of this world are always ambitious to stifle the tones of freedom, that silence may cover their own wretched demerits; but Christianity strives to promote the utmost cultivation of all that the personal worth of each, however obscure, may be revealed and rewarded. Truth presides within the holy of holies, in the temple of knowledge opened by heaven for every inhabitant of earth; but craft and bigotry stand in

the dark vestibule, to obstruct the approach of all save a favored few, who are their own servile and contemptible satellites. They brutally repel the child of misfortune from every point of redeeming confraternity, and, if possible, doom him to remain forever a melancholy monad, a contemned *solitaire*, in the deserts of unsympathizing and rayless despair. So far as sublunary counsel and support are concerned, he has but to sit down, and exclaim, "O world! how from thy every quarter blows a gale, wintry, cold, and bleak, to the heart that would expand!"

All youth are dead for the present life who do not hope for the future, and aspire to shine in beneficent goodness as they soar to attain eternal rewards. They are unworthy of being the companions of the exalted, and the recipients of bliss without alloy, so long as they do not elevate themselves to a level with the objects they revere, and nourish in their bosoms feelings kindred to the purest truth and divinest good. These objects of the highest reverence, and this fountain of the noblest desires, it is the prerogative of Christianity to create in the mind and heart of the most ignoble in the world's estimation, invigorate with the best supplies in the most exhausting race, and crown with the highest honors at the ultimate goal. Therefore, however cold and constant may be the selfishness of earth towards the youthful aspirant in his purest and most needy days, he never should yield to despondency,

"While the voice  
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent  
Of nature, calls him to his high reward,  
Th' applauding smile of Heaven."

Christ combined in his own person all the wrongs, griefs, and hopes, of humanity, because he passed through all the stages of human progress, and especially felt the bitterness of penury and neglect crippling the aspirations of his youth. The acorn, bedded in the loneliest dell of the forest, may know, perhaps, that it is an oak; but it was with keener sensibilities, clearer intuitions, that Christ, in the unheeded isola-

tion of his youth, felt, knew that he was God. It is through that bitter experience, transfigured in the person of Divinity itself, by him borne from earth to heaven, and thence rained down in the blended showers of pity and power, like dew and sunshine, on all aspiring youth, that he would create in them a consciousness of the highest existence, and prompt in them a readiness and competency for the noblest strife. He would have us know that a soul, though cradled in penury and nursed with wrongs, is not a fortuitous fraction of mind in the world, but a germinal system, in itself complete, written all over with indelible thought, every line and word and dot being a sparkling chapter in the great book of the universe. Who but the cruelly base, the insufferably despotic, will dare to blacken the obscurest page of such a work !

God is love ; consequently, the disposition which his spirit and word inspire, is in perfect harmony with his nature ; and it is easy to understand that, as the divine intelligence and mercy must be expansive, it would be impossible to form an idea of a godly man, or of God, keeping all his knowledge and kindness to himself. Supreme selfishness is contrary to a nature gifted with pure affections, human or divine. The search after and discovery of truth is one of the secrets of exalted happiness, and therefore shall we always find that those who are in reality the wisest and best, are most impelled to communicate their knowledge to the widest ranks. The man of God and friend of humanity explores most assiduously even in the deepest gloom, that he may learn, not for himself alone, but for all around and about him ; he acquires and imparts with an equal degree of pleasure, provided the desires of fellow-aspirants are aided, and the hearts of all made glad. If any burn to be great and useful, be assured that those who have themselves felt the flame in early and neglected youth, will be the first to recognize the kindling of kindred bosoms, and will blow the latent embers into a free and gladsome blaze.

Christianity teaches all her pupils to say to despots “ Hark !

we yearn for all the blessings you have permitted us to enjoy, but we yearn for liberty, restrained by no man, more. We want education, science, art, and religious institutions, in the highest form, — we want whatever may make us good, great, and influential, as individuals; but we want these favors not as a substitute for, but as a consequence of, Liberty the most perfect and unlimited. We do not want one good to be the compensation for another good, but one good to be the cause and consequence of every other, all derived from one source and conferred on all. We do not want Knowledge to do the work that Ignorance has hitherto done; nor would we have a few favored ones monopolize the secrets of earth, ocean, and sky, in order that they may the more effectually transform the masses into hypocrites or slaves. What is most needed in our day is a band of moral heroes, to reconstruct and adorn the whole fabric of society; men who will regard the past as the preparation of the present, the guide and happy presage of the future. We greatly need the services of those good soldiers of Jesus Christ who bravely fight out the patriotic battles of the only true republicanism, taking their best hints from the great Captain of our salvation, who with pure purpose struggled for the greatest good of the greatest number when most contemned, from obscure youth to splendid maturity toiled and bled, that the most neglected and abused might be cheered by the example of his life, and share in the glory of his death.”

Christianity plants enthusiasm, and not fanaticism, in the bosom of its devotee. There is an important difference between the two. The fanatic is furious to disseminate his faith for his faith's sake; the enthusiastic believer seeks to diffuse his faith for the sake of the benefits it is calculated to confer. There is something noble, generous, and loving in enthusiasm, of which fanaticism is utterly incompetent either to conceive or exemplify. True religion imparts to the mind all those ideas that are fitted most potently to stir the heart of man, and impel his intellect to the most substantial and useful exercise.

It kindles and perpetually feeds that wise zeal which has a grasp, breadth, and elevation of which mere sectarian selfishness is destitute, because not possessing the self-denying heroism and affection of which true greatness is always formed. Christianity is not a blind, headlong, brutal passion, that compels the few and scorns the many, but a mild, genial heat, that enlightens without distinction ; a light that warms with the fondest encouragement all it can reach. It is such a union of light and heat, such a blending of thought the most free with courage and love the most exalted, as most irresistibly triumphs, however low born its votary and however mighty its obstacles may be ; triumphs not simply because it is thought, but because it is courage also ; because it is comprehensive and ennobling love. It is not merely that indolent good nature which often steals the name of philanthropy, but the supernatural fire that flashed transforming ideas on the brain of Paul as he journeyed to Damascus, and poured still more celestial revelations on his heart, rousing divine yearnings that bigotry had smothered, and unsealing that fountain of charity, toward all which theological thorns tend so much to choke, and which partisan bitterness is sure to destroy. It is this spirit that evolves in the bosom of the young a deep longing for goodness, beauty, and truth ; a passion that impels through all time, and happily fits its possessor for eternity. What he most pants to possess, he is equally ambitious to diffuse ; he has great truths to utter as well as good deeds to perform, the utterance and the doing of which tell potently and blissfully on all who are darkened by ignorance, crushed by tyranny, or polluted by sin. Great revelations are enclosed in his breast, and revolutions both great and good are promoted by the labors of his hands, because his religion is not a lifeless creed, but a sympathizing belief sublimated into divine action, that seeks most to assist those who, innocently toiling in the deepest gloom, are most worthy of beneficent aid.

In the second place, Christianity, which was proudly contemned when most pure, is adapted to encourage the deserving



when most depressed. The great and truly divine idea of radically curing all the evil with which humanity is afflicted, of planting institutions which should be equally advantageous to individuals of every rank and communities of every clime, thus raising up for the Creator a better generation on the most beneficent plan, originated entirely with Jesus Christ. No mind before his ever conceived the purpose of establishing a kingdom of God, ruled only by truth, morality, and mutual joy, into which should be gathered all the nations of the earth. All this, too, was to be done without the use of any arbitrary force, merely by the gentle influence of convincing instruction, ordinances adapted to arouse the moral sensibilities, stimulate each individual to reflect upon his most important concerns, and warm his heart with fervid aspirations after the highest good. Christ would have man feel, even the humblest of our race, that he is endowed with a nature far exalted above the brutes, a soul infinitely superior to his body, and that he is capable of knowledge, goodness, and friendship of the highest order—intercourse the most delightful with Heaven. The faintest intellectual nature that gleams far down the vale of life admits of endless improvement, and he cheerfully bestows resources that will promote growth far beyond mortal existence and the decay of unnumbered worlds. Lifting an aspiring eye to the loftiest pinnacles of finite attainment, the youth who leans on Christ and follows his directions, soars rapturously in eternal approximation to the infinite excellence he was made to know. Fostered by such patronage, in view of such attainments, the obscurest and weakest aspirant bravely exclaims,—

“Rouse thee, heart !

“Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring ;  
My quiver still hath many purposes.”

Christianity is the quintessence of heroic fortitude, and therefore is it best adapted to encourage the deserving when most depressed. Its superiority in this respect was strikingly indicated by the magnanimous grandeur of its original design.

If a few spirits of antiquity seemed to be benevolent in their schemes for popular improvement, there were none who extended their views beyond their own people, and comprehended the advantage of foreign nations in their plan. Such projects bear little affinity to that greatness of mind and heart which includes the whole human family in its grasp, and would fill each individual with all the fulness of God.

Over the gates of Plato's school it was written, "Let no one who is not a geometrician enter." But very different is the inscription which invites the ignorant, the homeless and unpatronized of earth to enter the school of Christ and be freely taught the consummate wisdom of heaven. One of the most absurd laws at Athens was that which prohibited the exercise of the elegant arts to any but freeborn men. It would seem that selfish pride in that age, as in our own, deemed some men unworthy to exercise their powers of mind, as if the Almighty God had pronounced such unworthy of his gifts! On this principle, so disgraceful to those who maintain it, what would have become of the fables of Æsop, or the plays of Terence? both of whom were slaves. Many there are amongst the lowest gradations of human society whose most cherished thoughts

"Will rise and shake their breast, as madmen shake  
The stanchions of their dungeons, and howl out."

Shall these be imprisoned and stifled still? No! says Christianity; let every pure and noble feeling of the soul become "free of wing as Eden's garden bird." Socrates was said to have called minds into existence; but unfortunately the intelligence which is ushered into life by human means only, is at best but a beautiful slave. Christianity does infinitely more than this; it sets free each subject mind, and develops those sturdy generations of men, who bear abroad the seeds of liberty and light all round the globe. It first addressed itself to the lowly, and they rallied round the doctrines so happily adapted to invigorate their confidence and make fruitful their

souls ; so that, starting from the point where all true redemption originates, divine faith gradually ascended from the lower to the upper ranks, and filled at length the highest functions of imperial beneficence. The career and conquests of truth are ever the same. Wherever the free exercise of reason is opposed, or the happy extension of the arts and sciences is stayed, — wherever superstition has rendered the general intellect indolent and fearful, or a bigoted and intolerant priesthood has thrown the spirit of social improvement into chains, — there is it her province to appear, and emancipate all classes from every accursed bond. Under her influence alone can human nature obtain the full and unabridged possession of those rights of which it has so long been deprived — rights which should be immediately and universally enjoyed.

Says Hugo of St. Victor, “The tree of wisdom is only strong through love ; it only becomes green through hope, which yields the joy that keeps the heart warm during the winter of this life.” The aids here spoken of are most needed in the timid beginning of our upward course, when the young faculties are in greatest danger of being depressed. Frigid courtesy and yet more pointed neglect will cover the best powers sometimes, and becalm their bold adventures on the deep. Many a youth lingers in the shop or in the field, filled with the most auspicious desires, and waiting in tearful impatience for some one to encourage their development,

“ Even as a boat lies rocking on the beach,  
Waiting the one white wave to float it free.”

Christ never pictured this world as a scene of incessant gloom designed for any human being. He never looked frowningly on the sympathies which give beauty and permanency to the relations of the tenderest friendships. He never trampled on the joys of home, nor contemned those unspeakable delights which tell of true brotherhood, as impediments to holiness. He never stood amidst thronging congregations, an isolated prophet clad with omnipotent strength, but spurning

affection, and repelling the approach of docile, revering, and ardent discipleship; if he had, we might bow in admiration before the grandeur of his power; but where would be an effective appeal to our sensibilities, where a thrilling contact with the gentlest and profoundest yearnings of our existence? No; Jesus did not extinguish human impulses, but endowed them with a keener ardor and a wider grasp. He did not disrobe youthful hearts of fond memories and fervid aspirations, but filled them with a precious incense, to be blended with the sacrifices they offer on the altars of wisdom and benevolence. He would stimulate the early devotee to imitate himself in giving food to famished thousands, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, cleansing to the leper, vigor to the paralytic, reason to the insane, and ministration to infirmity in whatever form it may appear.

All the discourses and miracles of Christ were surprisingly beneficent and social, while, at the same time, they were as patriotic as they were humane. He pitied individual wants, and relieved them; he mourned over his country, because its religion had become a hollow, pharisaical mechanism, and its freedom lay strangled under the iron heel of a foreign despotism. As the best solace under these evils, and the means of their speediest destruction, Christ planted those pure republican doctrines on earth which elevate while they equalize, and purify while they redeem. He was evidently most anxious to reach the whole world of youth, that by a wise direction of their powers, judiciously given, he might train up a free and vigorous race in revolt against every wrong. Hence he caused the star of truth that gladdens the eternal dwelling which God hath prepared for his children to shine broadly, clearly, and with inextinguishable beams, on every earthly home. He was a perfect Redeemer, as well as a perfect Creator, seeking to render the feeblest votary perfect as himself, by stamping upon him the image of his perfection, alike as a speculative idea and a practical adaptation. Christianity breathes into the young heart, laid open to its influence, a spirit of love and

power that expands illimitably to the illimitable necessities of man; weeps with his weepings, and rejoices with his rejoicings; crowns his best triumphs, and becomes the rainbow of hope amid his bitterest depressions; cools the fever of inordinate excitement, spiritualizes his worldliness, consecrates his endeavors, and immerses him in the threefold baptism which all true soldiers of Christ require — the baptism of enthusiasm, reason, and religion.

Vague yearnings of soul fail not to the gifted youth, as he grows up a predestined hero: dreaming fancies, like gorgeous clouds, hang around him, as the curtains of existence slowly rise, in commingled splendor and gloom. Bright visions greet him, ever and anon, like star-formed faces peering between sombre clouds, and the auroral light of intense love gilds the horizon of auspicious day, while the music of heavenly song is on his path. And so he walks, — as was said of Burns, —

“In glory and in joy,  
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side!”

But “the world knows nothing of its greatest men.” It has ever shown but small favor to the most deserving. “Hunger and nakedness, perils and reviling, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice, have, in most times and countries, been the market price it has offered for Wisdom, the welcome with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian apostles, belong to old days; but the world’s Martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons. Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so “persecuted they the prophets,” not in Judea only, but in all places where men have been. But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest; and, as Jean Paul said, “the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage.”

The Scotch peasant, the British laborer, and American slave,

have a painful, but we hope not long, road yet to travel before they arrive at what the soul calls liberty, and which it is the highest crime to impede or destroy. Too many laws and customs, now in full force, have for their whole tendency to pamper the pride and feed the luxuries of the born-great, while they check the aspirations and depress the hopes of the born-little; and, as this state of things is in direct hostility with the spirit of Christianity, we cannot believe that a just God will permit such systems long to endure. The spirit of heavenly freedom, like the poetry of earth, never dies; its light is growing brighter, and its spreadings wider, each day; and speedily shall each cottage be reached, and each troubled spirit be filled with the radiant light, the invincible power, the austere charms, and immortal peace, of celestial virtue. In the obscurest walks of life, as in the most prominent, true religion will then develop its legitimate influence and worth, acting upon every mind as Nature when she forms a flower, unfolding the whole system of the plant at the same time, and breathing life and beauty on every leaf. Sectarian creeds and partial systems actuate only fragmentary natures, leaving the best faculties in worse than useless repose, like palsied limbs; while to Christianity, as a whole, in its primitive purity and power, belongs the glorious prerogative of eliciting each vital principle of the soul, giving appropriate exercise to every function, proportion to every part, and to the harmonious whole a happy reward; thus animating its subject when most depressed, maturing all his powers with the most salutary discipline, and bringing him, in the end, to the exalted condition of "a perfect man in Christ Jesus." It is this religion which opens to the obscurest devotee the prospect of unbounded progression and improvement; inspirits him to enter on a career of emulation with angels; to despair of nothing, but to hope for every thing requisite to promote the moral advancement of the world; to stop at no point short of universal liberty and perfect holiness; to toil for these results without ceasing, and to invoke, in every struggle, the almighty energies of God.

That which is most needed amongst the youth of our age is the culture of a humanizing spirit, which would refine the feelings, call forth the affections, purify and expand the reflective faculties, and which, ever aiming toward true catholicity of sentiment, of perception, and aspiration, would evolve the good from the husk of error and sin, would transmute antipathy into affection, and evil into excellence, would teach men to scan, not so much the transient and repulsive in each other, as the unchangeable and praiseworthy, which is the glory of their common nature, and which makes them one with their Father in heaven. It is kindness that we want, and not coercion; substantial support, and not hypocritical homilies. The heart must have a prop without as well as within, on which to lean, or it will fall and break. O, how sad and crushing it is to the young heart thirsting for truth, to be mocked with empty traditions and frigid advice, which tell nothing to, and nothing of, the mystery within that burns for utterance, sympathy, and solution! arrogant dogmatizers, who set up antiquated mummies, skeletons of by-gone barbarism, as their idolatrous standards, and teach youth that their damnation is certain to result if they do not implicitly adore. But the greatest and best messengers from God to man, who reveal God to man, and man to himself, — who elucidate the universe, as a divine language to humanity, down to its most desponding sons, teaching each of our brethren to address his Maker in the fervor, fulness, and sincerity of his heart, without foolish formalities inspired by craft or fear, — are not trained after this manner. They are the greatest, wisest, and best teachers, because the Bible is their only creed, the Spirit of God and the universe their only inspiration, and Jesus Christ their only master; therefore are they the most truthful, instructive, and free. The predominant feeling of their bosom is that of perfection, aspirations after something sublimer and more beautiful than our gross physical perceptions can ever present. Beyond the brightest, they would soar to a brighter; beyond the grandest, to a grander; beyond the best that we are permitted to attain beneath the skies, to a better more glo-

riously beaming beyond. All external glory waxes dim, when compared to the radiant forms that burst brightly on the imagination of such, and perpetually purify, while they inflame, the heart.

When a brave-hearted and noble-minded youth appears on the public stage, stained not by the prevalent vices of the age, and yearning with earnest desire to consecrate his faculties to the benefit of his race, his country, and his God, the probability of distinguished success will depend mainly, whether conventional forms have a firm hold upon his nature, and whether he have moral force enough to shatter and escape from the base trammels they impose. No youth ever becomes a man fully developed in head and heart, till he feels most deeply and constantly that the universe exists as much for every other human creature as for himself, and that every such fellow-mortal exists in order that he may freely receive and enjoy every good and perfect gift that the Maker of the universe can confer. Feeling and knowing this, the exemplary Christian will be most studious to seek out and encourage the most timid and needy, knowing that in this consists the greatest bliss and best reward.

“We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”

We have said that Christianity was proudly contemned when most pure, and is adapted to encourage the deserving when most depressed. We remark, —

Thirdly, it patronizes all aspirations that are both free and grand. He whose own moral powers are most divinely cultivated is always the most kind and tolerant towards all mankind. He will gladly hail the fond hopes of the human spirit, its most daring enterprise, the bold and illimitable navigation into the unknown regions of truth; he will cheer on the Argonauts of humanity who boldly put to sea beyond the pillars of Hercules,



and who already seem to discover rising before them the Fortunate Islands of the future. Through the gathering tempests that lower on the present view, they behold a better era dawning, which shall bring a perfect regeneration of popular ideas, a full development of Christian civilization, and the universal establishment of truth republican and omnipotent. These are the brave and beneficent citizens of the time to come, who prove the solidity of their faith and the sincerity of their zeal by most industriously toiling to promote present good. It is thus :

“They prove unto themselves that nought but God  
Can satisfy the soul he maketh great.”

Moral perfection, by its vital energy and symmetrical proportions, always kindles the most fervid desires in the heart, and makes the most beautiful as well as sublime impressions on the mind. Introduced to the soul through a pure medium, it produces, in the greatest degree and most salutary mode, an elevating, liberating, and purifying effect. It elicits and fortifies in the popular heart that nobler sense latent in all which is adapted to the perception of divine things ; and does this, not by a formal, didactic process, but by fostering a spontaneous worship of the beautiful and good, through that life-giving, inspiring influence which invariably attends the labors of him who exercises all his better faculties for the best interest of all his fellow-men. He bends his ear with fraternal solicitude to hear the melody of free spirits every where overflowing with irrepressible joys, like birds “singing of summer in full-throated ease.” These are the workmen for building up eternal things. They are of divine origin, serve a divine law, fulfil a divine mission, and lead to divinely-ordained results. Their piety is a living and loving essence, which assuredly stands higher than mere ceremonial worship. It is that adoration of God as the merciful Father of a common race, the Christian faith, which makes Jesus its own, in a fuller, deeper, more consolatory sense, as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, the Intercessor on behalf of the most wretched and obscure, than

those hollow and unfeeling rites which, in fact, only assign to him a selfish existence on earth, and an arbitrary control over the mercies of heaven.

The truth as it is in Christ is "the power of God unto salvation." But, says Channing, "let none imagine that its chosen temple is an uncultivated mind, and that it selects, as its chief organs, the lips of the unlearned. Religious and moral truth is indeed appointed to carry forward mankind; but not as conceived and expounded by narrow minds, not as darkened by the ignorant, not as debased by the superstitious, not as subtilized by the visionary, not as thundered out by the intolerant fanatic, not as turned into a drivelling cant by the hypocrite. Like all other truths, it requires for its full reception and powerful communication a free and vigorous intellect. Indeed, its grandeur and infinite connections demand a more earnest and various use of our faculties than any other subject. As a single illustration of this remark, we may observe, that all moral and religious truth may be reduced to one great and central thought — perfection of mind; a thought which comprehends all that is glorious in the divine nature, and which reveals to us the end and happiness of our own existence. This perfection has as yet only dawned on the most gifted human beings; and the great purpose of our present and future existence is, to enlarge our conceptions of it without end, and to embody and make them manifest in character and life. And is this sublime thought to grow within us, to refine itself from error and impure mixture, to receive perpetual accessions of brightness from the study of God, man, and nature, and especially to be communicated powerfully to others, without the vigorous exertion of our intellectual nature? Religion has been wronged by nothing more than by being separated from intellect, than by being removed from the province of reason and free research, into that of mystery and authority, of impulse and feeling. Hence it is, that the prevalent forms or exhibitions of Christianity are comparatively inert, and that most which is written on the subject is of little or no worth. Christianity was given,

not to contradict and degrade the rational nature, but to call it forth, to enlarge its range and its powers. It admits of endless development. It is the last truth which should remain stationary. It ought to be so explored and so expressed, as to take the highest place in a nation's literature, as to exalt and purify all other literature."

Christianity is worthy of supreme regard, because it is a redeeming power of the highest order. But side by side with the idea of redemption stands another idea, of at least equal importance — that of reconciliation. Redemption is something essentially internal; it is liberation from the yoke of sin, restoration of the harmony between the material and the spiritual life; while reconciliation implies an external relation, which restores the appropriate connection between the sinner and a holy God. To experience the practical power of these is to possess Christianity in its essence, which communicates a higher, more perfect knowledge of God, as love, as the merciful Father who sent the Redeemer to save the world, and has vouchsafed his Spirit to reveal to all men his own nature and perfections. As only in *acts* can the *living* God be fully revealed, and in their saving power his spirit be manifested, so it is only in action, wise and benevolent, that our own virtues can be developed, and, by their influence, the world be blessed. All the will of Jehovah in relation to man was clearly and fully represented in the life of Christ, full of *grace* and *truth*; and it is precisely in the same way that all the mercies we receive are to be lived out benevolently for the good of all our fellow-men.

Christianity teaches not only the *human* nature of man, but also his divine origin and deathless capacities. It does this by causing the souls in which it dwells to aspire towards God, as bright flames, at night, stream upward to the stars. The humble votary longs not only for something higher than can be found on earth, but even for the unconditional, the primal fount of life and being. His insatiable spirit requires not merely something *more* perfect and *more* pure, but finds entire

satisfaction only in the *absolutely* perfect and pure, the adorable One, the essential Ideal of truth, love, and holiness. It is this that generates the immortal impulse from within which makes the gladsome soul cry, on, on, always, on!

The ambition which Christianity creates it gloriously sustains and usefully employs. It transforms the obscure youth, often, into the eagle which you see piercing the storm and braving the sun; an eagle in every fibre of his body, in every look of his eye, in relation to the earth he has left, the air he winnows with sovereign wing, the lightnings on which he gazes unblenched, and the heavens to which he darts unwearied and unalarmed. It is said that the Danes used to make their horses deaf, lest they should be frightened at the war-songs sung by their foes on the field of battle; but no such precaution is requisite for the better success of those who contend under the banners of our holy religion. Each young volunteer struggles valiantly from the cradle to the tomb, that he may be useful to virtue, serviceable to merit in distress, and ascend from the field of complete conquest, to enjoy in heaven, with the great Deliverer himself, the sense of consoling, generous, liberating ideas, left by him on earth.

Men of the most refined sensibilities have usually the most ethereal intellects; and they are always the most radical reformers, because it is the best and strongest part of their nature to love freedom. They have more hope, more enthusiasm for justice, more impatience under oppression, more acuteness of perception, more readiness to act, than common men, and less inclination to despair. The heart of a true hero, confiding in a righteous Providence, and wholly consecrated to the advocacy of universal rights, like the sea-fowl that rests upon the bosom of the tempestuous deep, seems to float upon the foaming billows with as much composure as if it ruled them. Such men prefer death to desertion of duty. They encounter the menaces of power, endure the gloom of prisons, and, if need be, ascend the scaffold or embrace the rack with a step that never falters, lips that never are recreant, and looks

that never change. They love God and injured humanity with all the nobleness of their sympathetic nature, and they are ready to encounter death in the most dreadful forms, if from their tears and blood a higher life may spring to bless the masses that survive. The feeling of progress is the greatest spring of personal delight, and the prospect of promoting this amongst the people at large imparts cheerfulness and courage to the heroical under the severest lot. With prostrate soul and kneeling heart they undertake any task required by duty, and submit to any fate, resolved on resisting every form of injustice on earth, contented with nothing less than universal rights and approving Heaven.

It has been said that "no man can be just to himself, can comprehend his own existence, can put forth all his powers with an heroic confidence, can deserve to be the guide and inspirer of other minds, till he has risen to communion with the Supreme Mind; till he feels his filial connection with the Universal Parent; till he regards himself as the recipient and minister of the Infinite Spirit; till he feels his consecration to the ends which religion unfolds; till he rises above human opinion, and is moved by a higher impulse than fame." To bestow this is the prerogative and essence of Christianity, which recognizes and teaches us to reverence in God the attributes of impartial justice and universal love, and to hear him commanding us through the spirit of his word and the monitions of our conscience, to become what we adore.

Wantonly to depress, rather than patronize, free and grand aspirations in a rational, moral being, is to inflict on him the greatest wrong. We never acquit ourselves of the highest duty we owe every human being, till we have exerted ourselves to the utmost in planting within him the seeds of wisdom, disinterestedness, the firmest fortitude and most beneficent piety. We are to address all with the timely aid and soothing tones which reveal to the richly-endowed glimpses of a not very distant perfection, which prophesy improvements proportioned to persevering efforts, increase energy of purpose, and

add wings to the soul. It is thus that we may send forth those who become preëminently "lights of the world," shining the more splendidly in contrast with the gloom from which they emerged. The first word of encouragement spoken by kindred greatness to the gifted heart awakens therein a consciousness of having been created to attain something greatly good; and this primary truth becomes a motive power, whose momentum and usefulness are augmented at each new remove, until the soul flies at length with a majestic and swift effulgence that flings the sun into the shade. Thus aspirations that are divinely free in their nature, and grand in their aim,

"Pursue the flying storm;  
Ride on the volleyed lightning through the heavens;  
Or, yoked with whirlwinds or the northern blast,  
Sweep the long track of day."

Men of rare endowments early and acutely feel that the finger of Providence is upon them, and that they have some high destiny to perform. Such was the case with Cyrus, Homer, Alexander, Shakspeare, Milton, Keats, Scott, and Napoleon. Of all men on earth, Socrates was the least likely to be superstitious; yet he believed he was acted on by a spirit. The greatest men in every department of high effort have always asserted their belief of a supernatural stirring in their youthful natures, which supported them in calamity, guided them through sombre doubts, and urged them upward courageously, whenever they were encompassed with silence and solitude. But over and above all other resources of genius, Christianity bestows the blessings of infinite support and eternal reward. As the dew by night, and the sun by day, the genial rain and lavish smile of summer, endow a tree with its beautiful fecundity, so do the hallowed influences of the cross make both fragrant and fruitful the mind on which they descend. They are the generators of fair ideas, the sole regenerators of fallen humanity, breeding a brightness and a beatitude every where, and nourishing in the feeblest nature a potency to

hallow and redeem. Whatever visits mankind with aspirings for something higher and holier than the meagreness and monotony of dull earthliness; whatever tells them of more brilliant and substantial possibilities than those that hover transiently round the selfish concerns of their present career; whatever kindles within them emotions that warm and stretch beyond the narrow affections of their hearths, and the corroding anxieties about worldly pelf, — is derived from a source above this world, is an impulse and a strength which guaranties human progression, and points to glories above human ken, a gladness hereafter to be fully revealed. Enough is possessed here, however, to make the participant exclaim, “O, to create within the mind is bliss.” He prays perpetually that Heaven would breathe on him inspiring spirit-breath, and pants with perpetually increased longings to ascend beyond those high diademed orbs which show to the enraptured aspirant his crown to come.

The religion which actuates a true disciple of Christ is no mere faith of custom tagged on the gross outside of his nature, like a dormant bat to a dead bough, but the spirit of a new life, a second and better, by which he is enabled to scrutinize and comprehend all the mysteries of the first. It is the freest part of man made still freer by a divine emancipation, and endowed with a competency to achieve the grandest results. It is infinite excellence infused into every finite faculty by assimilation, causing all the spiritual attributes of the subject to swell into the sublime proportions of the model upon which they are formed, and ultimately to be filled with excellence the most complete. Under this process, limited views are excluded, and spiritual bondage is impossible. The first truth a mind once disenthralled learns is, that forced obedience is the

“Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,  
 Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame  
 A mechanized automaton.”

He who really feels the price of his redemption, and longs

to live to Christ, a pure, free mind, actively and widely employed in the promotion of human welfare will most industriously accumulate resources from without, while his best strength always springs from within his own soul. The greatest load of erudition lends the lightest wings to real genius, and never encumbers them. True aspiration riseth from research, as the force and splendor of the flame are measured by the amount of fuel that feeds it. From his earliest youth, the true man is governed only by his own deep-rooted convictions of truth and duty, from the prompt and persevering discharge of which he is never flattered or forced to flinch. In all the desperate struggles generally requisite to promote the cause of personal and popular improvement, — one day in a prison, and the next day in a palace, — he never for an instant loses sight of the one grand end, — mercy for the unmerciful and increased light for all. He knows that the temple of honor is seated on an eminence, to be approached but by some difficulty, and to be entered only through virtue, which in magnanimous struggles is always *tried*. The treachery and cruelty of the envious and mean may do much to destroy his confidence in human nature, and often depress his mind when it would rise to the contemplation or execution of sublime designs; but his equanimity can never be long disturbed, nor the dignity of his ambition become permanently debased. Ill treatment from the strong, and bitter experience in common with all the weak, will only render him but the more diligent in accumulating for timely disbursement the resources of mercy and truth; for the gentle and pure emotions of benevolence ever hang about the soul of genius, “like a pearl-wreath around beauty’s brow.”

There is a sense in which it may be properly said that Christianity has but just begun its work of reformation in the highest and broadest form. Under its influence, we see in our day a new order of society created, and invited to the enjoyment of unprecedented privileges and rights. The beneficent changes already begun, and advancing on the largest scale, we believe, will shortly accomplish yet greater good by revealing



to mankind at large the worth and capabilities of their nature, and by teaching them to "honor all" who of that nature partake. Viewed in its light, the most obscure children of our race are beings cared for by the Almighty, to whom he has given his Son, upon whom he pours his Spirit, whom he has created for the greatest good, and whom he would elevate to a participation with himself in the highest glory. Perfection in Jesus Christ is revealed to all, even the most infantile capacities of mankind, not for their discouragement, but most glorious consolation — a model which all are qualified, just in proportion to the purity and grandeur of their desires, both to approach and imitate. The aspirant may at first bend in deepest gloom; but if he holds on his way patiently and imploringly, he shall soon possess himself of divine light and strength, that will make his spirit bright and buoyant as morning is in heaven.

The best product and proof of true progress in our day is the superior self-culture sought and obtained by most individuals amongst the masses of mankind. Popular institutions are every where rising, which are so many centres radiating light and improvement over the largest areas of industrious mind. Under these genial influences the people at large are induced to think and act for themselves, cultivating their own powers and faculties. This is most clearly indicated by the increased appreciation of those whom it is most important the body of the people should rightly estimate, — the men of talent, genius, and worth, who spring from their own humble ranks. Working-men toiling daily with their own hands, find or make leisure to produce the finest creations of matter and mind, which are deemed none the less valuable because they are not the fruit of aristocratic patronage. Time was when the creators of beautiful things were obliged to look to a higher grade of society to obtain a proper appreciation of their worth. Then they were wont to stoop in order to rise; become servile in order to obtain support; degrade the fair and holy gift within them before they could obtain the position which seemed to belong to their superior endowments. But such is the state of the

case no longer. Now, intellect is beginning to be esteemed according to its intrinsic worth, originate where it may; beneficent, beautiful, and potent genius reigns supreme every where. This is perfectly harmonious with the spirit of the age and of Christ, for all great gifts are always republican in their character and works. They deal with the universal, and appeal most directly, as well as most powerfully, to the common heart of man. They are the imbodiments and chief agents of feeling, thought, adoration, and not of external rank, form, or station. The finest exemplification of worth oppressed by wrong in olden time, — such as Prometheus blessing mankind while he defied the thunder of Jove, even when fastened to the barren rock, with the vulture tearing at his heart, — pictures exactly those who strike for freedom in modern times, braving the dungeon, the stake, and the scaffold, in their enthusiasm for popular improvement, and determination to promote it, putting every thing at stake, even their own lives. This spirit has no affinity with the few in their exclusive distinctions, but with the many in their generous passions, fraternal fears, sorrows, joys, and triumphs. It invites man to the great feast of which God and nature are the ample provisions in all their diversity of refreshing gifts. These make their lover to grow up in lovely order and sublime harmony; to aspire towards an affinity of infinite grandeur with a speed and splendor to which the “lightning shall be shadow, and the sun sadness.”

It has been said that poetry “imbodies the loftiest abstractions in the noblest forms; the spirit of divinity in divine imagery. It excites admiration at the great deeds of great men, and realizes times of old with the heroic virtues which they exhibited. ‘It opes the sacred source of sympathetic tears,’ touching with pity as with admiration. It rejoices in the simplicity of the flowery meadow, and the gorgeousness of the Gothic cathedral. It teaches lessons of wisdom in the unity of the epic and the collisions of the drama. Its range is from the profoundest philosophy to the lightest sport; and in all, it cheers the spirit, purifies the aim, excites the exertions,

and graces the conquest, of those who are aspiring towards political freedom and social improvement. It gives them power in the pursuit of their object, and enhances the faculty for its enjoyment. And in this diversified power there is room for the rainbow fancy that makes even tears sparkle; that resolves light into its varied colors, and with their hues paints the water-drop; that gives grace and adornment to whatever it touches; that points the keen sarcasm, which must be taken with a smile as it is pronounced with a smile; that calls in the alliance of kindred arts, rendering music and verse reciprocal echoes of each other; that enshrines poetical fancies in elementary and enduring melodies; that aids the exhilaration of banquet and bower, of camp and court; that weaves the light wreath for gayest hours, and sounds the inspiring march to which men advance in sterner times." We should particularly observe that this power, with all other attributes of gifted minds, when not perverted by priestly or regal influence, invariably advocate the cause of popular freedom. Thus Homer was the poet of Greek republicanism. Amid all the diversified imagery of his writings, through all his conflicts, single or multitudinous, there stands out palpably one pervading idea—the mischief which accrued to his country from the strife of aristocratic partisans, when "for the king's offence the people died." Still more strikingly is this seen in the great Christian poet Milton. In his correspondence, some one who had written to him praised his "policy." He disclaimed the term, saying that it was not policy upon which he acted, but religious patriotism. This was ever the prevailing principle with him; it was his head, heart, and conscience; and it was in perfect harmony with his nature, always aspiring to perfect freedom, that, having at one time selected King Arthur for the subject of an epic, he soon discarded that theme, and determined to represent the fortunes of the human race as imbodyed in that of their first ancestors; in which production he showed the strongest love of freedom and the clearest principles of republicanism

beating in his heart and crowning with a supernal glory all the creations of his lofty intellect.

Thus have we endeavored to show that Christianity, pure of spirit, and legitimate in exercise, which was proudly contemned when most pure, is adapted to encourage the deserving when most depressed, and ever delights to patronize all aspirations that are both free and grand. It coins words in young and generous hearts that are often as brave as the bravest deeds; words that have created revolutions more memorable, more enduring, and more blissful, than the most glorious battles that freedom ever gained with martial weapons. They are words compounded of wisdom, courage, and love, but not of that shallow cunning, and commonplace charlatanism, which hunt for insipid popularity by fawning on arrogant power. The brave, free, and consistent Christian scorns all crippling conventionalisms, stands up fearlessly, though alone, to resist every form of injustice, labors assiduously and kindly to foster every order of merit, and sows with a lavish hand the seed destined to make glad the eye of coming centuries, in view of unlimited harvests gleaming with immortal richness and eternally reproduced. Thus obscure and discarded youth, like young Christ battling against the penury, hypocrisies, and popular wrongs of his day, learn in solitude and gloom to continue undaunted by obstacles, while they nourish noble thoughts, and verify to themselves that to persevere unsubdued by defeats, is itself the most glorious success we can know on earth. The blows of adversity prepare them for future triumphs; more closely incorporate the greatest mental strength of their being with its greatest affection; and in the full development of both, create an enthusiasm for perfection, and a sympathy with all who aspire toward it, which no hardship can depress and no tyranny resist.

## CHAPTER III.

### CHRISTIANITY THE FORTIFIER OF THE WEAK.

THE general points discussed in this series of chapters, on the republican influence of Christian doctrine, will be found to harmonize with those considered in the corresponding delineations of the republican character of Jesus Christ, which constitute the first part of this work. In saying that Christianity is the solace of the obscure, the patron of the aspiring, the fortifier of the weak, &c., we but remind ourselves that the Savior of the world emerged from the deepest earthly gloom, was most contemned in his early aspirations, and needed continually to pray that his human weakness might be divinely sustained. As was our Lord in the lowly and trying circumstances of his incarnate state, so is every truthful disciple who has imbibed his spirit, and would imitate his beneficent life. He needs all the succors afforded by a divine example, as well as the history of a divine belief; and, in all his struggles, should remember that Christianity was fiercely persecuted when most weak; sympathizes with the suffering when most wronged; and fortifies the confiding with invincible strength.

In the first place, the fact that Christianity was fiercely persecuted in the feebleness of its youth, is perfectly consistent with the character it bore in contrast with the world it came to redeem. At the time Christ appeared, the world stood in the greatest need of a religion at once moral, intelligible, and spiritual; adapted to human nature, level to the capacities of the multitude, fitted to all countries, and ennobling in its influence upon all institutions. Christianity exactly and fully met this want, because all its doctrines respecting God and our

relations to him agreed perfectly with the moral law, and most facilitated human obedience. It poured the clearest light upon ethics, and rendered their sacred obligations most intuitive. Moreover, it prescribed no external rites and ceremonies, but such as, by their manifest moral and exalting efficacy, best demonstrated their own intrinsic worth. Because Christianity, by its very nature, was most intimately connected with all in man that is most lasting and unchangeable, it was happily fitted to become universal, and was designed, by infinite wisdom and love, to exert the best influence on man's temporal and eternal welfare. She lends human nature that aid which is indispensable to self-conquest, and which has always been most anxiously desired. In this new fountain of salvation, infinitely capacious and purifying, the world was invited to participate in energies the most potent and salutary, animating and ennobling man in every faculty and every where, rescuing body and soul from every form of vassalage, regulating all his social relations, and filling him with all the fulness of divine freedom and love.

The better to conceive the worth of this religion, we have but to glance at the moral character of the world, when its divine Author was fiercely persecuted, and all its heavenly claims were first repelled. When Christ appeared, earth presented nothing but the frightful spectacle of ignorance, slaughter, and slavery. The foot of the strong was perpetually on the necks of the despairing and unresisting masses, while the oppressors never ceased to carry on the bloodiest conflicts among themselves. Thus, while the majority were in perpetual chains, and the minority in perpetual strife, the whole race appeared supremely cursed. From the perpetuity of such misery Christianity came to free mankind. Infinite truth and mercy appeared on the field of conflict to encourage the feeble to resist the strong, and to resist them effectually. But while the tyrannical minority was to be checked and overthrown by redeemed and enlightened majorities, it was not anarchy that was appointed to rule, but love. Both parties were first to be

reasoned with, then conciliated, and finally blended in one common championship of the highest freedom and blindest truth. Thus, amidst the greatest oppressions and most exasperated antagonists, Christianity appears with weapons at once invincible and unavenging, because she comes to save, and not to destroy. Her design is, if possible, to convert into a votary the enraged tyrant, even while she rescues the bleeding victim; and therefore does she mildly interpose for the benefit of both, with a power

“Which, like a strong man’s arm,  
Keeps back two foes whose lips are white,  
Whose hearts with rage are warm.”

Moral aspirings and religious yearnings have never been entirely unknown to human nature; but it was impossible for spiritual perfection to be obtained, so long as blind coercion was predominant. The kingdom of physical energy was carried to its grandest height by the Romans, and was doomed to pass away at the dawn of that better kingdom, based on intellectual immunities for all, under the beneficent dominion of which the most mutilated and degraded child of a suffering race might become a perfect man. And though the main purpose of Christ, and the immediate effect of his incarnation, was to teach true morality and a saving religion, the indirect and very important influence of his doctrines, for eighteen centuries, has been to substitute the reign of free intellectual power for that of arbitrary dictation every where. This tends to the repossession of original rights, and the equal balance of all our faculties, in which every man will become a son of God, by uniting, in their just proportions and healthful exercise, his physical energy, intellectual power, moral ability, and religious affections. The chief instrument for working out this external equality and internal equilibrium is Christianity, the divine balm of the keenest woe, which tyrants of every grade most fiercely hate. But the time has come, when consolidated power and vengeful persecution can no longer prevent the steady growth and ultimate triumph of the true lawgivers and most potent rulers

of the age, who, at the outset, seldom or never occupy situations of note, are little known, and are seldom heard by the unheeding crowds around them. Nevertheless, it is they who appear as the high priests of destiny, whose whispered thoughts evoke the tempests which annihilate empires and shatter chains. From the nineteenth century onward, earth will be governed by crownless and sceptreless monarchs, whose only homage will be the revolutions they have promoted, and the universal blessings they have conferred. Our race will soon have learned that there is human truth and divine truth harmoniously blended, and offered equally to all in Christ, the first great Teacher of republican doctrine, infinitely higher and more salutary than the bigoted creeds which selfish priests sell to their victims, and which trembling despots are always ambitious to bind on all free souls. From such wretched creatures the good may expect persecution, for that which they most hate they certainly have good reason most to fear.

Christianity plants redemption and perfects order in society, by imparting force to reason and uprightness to conscience; and these are precisely the attributes which it is impossible for oppression long to resist. In vain may despots expect to hold mankind bound by a chain, every link of which has previously been sundered by the lightning of truth. As, in the original creation, the kindling elements raved and struggled in the gigantic chaos — water and fire, darkness and light, at war — vapor and cloud hardening into mountains, while the Breath of Life moved a steadfast splendor over all; so, in the grand moral renovations of our day, — when the new heavens and new earth seem rapidly forming, — light pierces to the lowest depths, permeates the greatest masses, discriminates between all spiritual and material elements, energizes every rational being to act for himself, and qualifies him to be his own teacher, guide, and judge. The word of God is open for all, and there is but one Priest in the universe who has a right to say, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of me.” It is the religion



of this our only Prophet, Priest, and Ruler supreme, that declares the poorest child ever born in the lowest vale of human life, to be like himself, infinitely more worthy of regard than planets, satellites, and suns, in their harmonious movements, because, with all their magnitude and magnificence, the intellectual, the moral, the patient, the energetic, the overcoming immortality in a human bosom, swelling though it may be under the tatters of most absolute want, in its diversity of endowment and grandeur of destiny, is the most interesting and sublime of all finite objects upon which the universe can gaze. As Christianity regards every human being as an heir of earth's best blood, born with no inferior right to the free and full enjoyment of Heaven's highest blessings, it is not wonderful that it is arrogantly hated by those whose only delight is in persecuting the weak.

Secondly, we proceed to remark, more fully, that Christianity sympathizes with the suffering when most wronged. It is a truth proved and exemplified by numerous examples on every hand, that merit the most elevated and abundant originates in apparently the most unpropitious scenes. It is a fact worthy of reflection, that those persons who are reared in homes of classic elegance, improved by art, and embellished with natural charms, like Edens, whence stark, deformed, and vulgar need is excluded with greatest care, are rarely benefited by, or worthy of, their superior blessings. The manners and superficial culture of such, are, indeed, generally tinged with the refinement that surrounds them; but rarely does it imbue the intellect with rugged power, or invest the heart with sterling charms. The master-spirits who sow the earth with grand thoughts, and adorn it with beneficent deeds, are invariably the produce of a pure and free soil, who proclaim, in a healthful and fruitful growth, the vigorous source whence they sprung, and the unbounded resources they command, delicate in their diction, rich in their imagery, exalted in their thought, thrilling in their own heart with an exquisite sense of the beautiful, and impressive before others

with the most august unfoldings of the sublime. The passion which family pride, sectarian zeal, or pedantic exclusiveness aims to feed, is light which, like straw on flame, may be a fierce, but is also a fading fire. Whereas the education conferred by our holy religion on the minds and hearts of suffering devotees who kneel at her altars in the solitary glen, or on the mountain-side, is as profound as it is comprehensive, substantial in its basis, and gorgeous in its adornments; a system of ennobling truth and unfading glory, built like the temple of the Infinite, "whose bright foundations are the heights of heaven."

That sympathy for the suffering which Christianity most strongly prompts and most bountifully rewards is designed to teach, as the first lesson in its school, that earth, and the separable elements which compose it, were not created for a class, but as free blessings for all. "The common sun, the air, the skies," were not designed for more equal apportionment among mankind than were the common blessings of intellectual enjoyment, moral cultivation, and personal liberty. This position, we know, is denied by some, and its practical realization is opposed by many. It is to be confessed, moreover, that great minds, such as impress their characteristic marks upon the age in which they are matured, and thenceforward, like the mightiest rivers, pursue their beneficent course from the obscure fountains of their origin, making continents fruitful as they perpetually flow, are very rare. The severe circumstances which usually attend superior merit, will easily explain the cause. But it is not only manifest that the best gifts of Providence are the commonest, and the best gifts of intellect the rarest; it is equally clear that there is a perpetual tendency in these rare gifts to become common, and it is the peculiar office of Christianity to promote such a republican equalization. The highest order of intellect is always the most active and beneficent; this law holds good from God himself down through all gradations of moral existences. Around the most exalted mental and moral excellence the

purest atmosphere is most rapidly generated, which tends most powerfully towards distinct expression, in order to teach most widely the most important truths. Hence persons who are born in the possession of the greatest native excellence always bring with them that indomitable energy and useful activity which characterize Him who never wearieeth, and with a divine purpose diffuse themselves wider and yet wider through society, until they become the common portion and heritage of mankind. All great prophets, apostles, poets, artists, writers, orators, redeemers, are products and proofs of this principle. Their being's end and aim is to diffuse knowledge: the ever-increasing and multiplying excitement of intellect; the renovation and exaltation of hearts; the rescuing of immortal souls from apathy, grossness, absorption in the things that perish; the carrying forward an impeded race, and training our common nature for its predestined maturity of thought and holy emotion, — this is the grand reason why all true greatness is born, antagonizes through frightful gloom with frightful wrongs, is persecuted by tyrants, revered by the masses, and at length, in mockery, is crucified that all the world may be blessed.

In this connection, it should be observed, that the commonest material auxiliaries are subservient to, and connected with, the spread of the rarest intellectual and spiritual blessings. As if Jehovah was especially intent on causing the most desirable treasures to be most rapidly and widely diffused, he requires only the very simplest means to be employed in connection with his own invaluable gifts. For instance, printing demands only some bits of metal, and not types of precious gems; a few rags spread into paper, and not sheets of refined gold. The telegraph, that streams the creations of genius over earth, asks only a coil of iron wire as a track, while all heaven furnishes the lightning messengers to play thereon. The guide which conducts commerce athwart oceans is but a tiny rod of steel vitalized with a power direct from God; and the almost omnipotent agent working so patiently and irresistibly beneath

the deck, while its sturdy arms lash the huge billows into foam, and sweep sublimely from continent to continent, is but the simple subordination to a high purpose of two elements the most universal and accessible to man. As in nature, art, and science, so is it in grace; the most needful is most abundant, and should be most equally diffused: since God grants all gratuitously, the man who presumes to deprive his fellow of his lawful share, is dastardly mean and the most accursed. The effeminate, the selfish, and the proud may treat with neglect the predestined sons of might and heroes of good; but Christianity sympathizes with them when most wronged, and is rapidly preparing the way all over the world for the full development of their worth, and its appropriate reward.

“Beneath the frown of wicked men  
The people’s strength is bowing;  
But, thanks to God, they can’t prevent  
The lone wild flowers from blowing!

“On useful hands and honest hearts  
The base their wrath are wreaking;  
But, thanked be God, they can’t prevent  
The storm of heaven from speaking.”

There is another great law of divine beneficence eminently worthy of observation. It is, that those things which relate to our highest welfare most powerfully affect the common mind, and most strongly cleave even to the weakest memory. The missionary Moffat says, that, when he had concluded a long sermon to a great number of African savages, his hearers divided into companies, to talk the subject over. “While thus engaged, my attention was arrested by a simple-looking young man, at a short distance. The person referred to was holding forth, with great animation, to a number of people, who were all attention. On approaching, I found, to my surprise, that he was preaching my sermon over again, with uncommon precision, and with great solemnity, imitating, as nearly as he could, the gestures of the original. A greater contrast could scarcely be conceived, than the fantastic figure and the solem-

nity of his language — his subject being eternity, while he evidently felt what he spoke. Not wishing to disturb him, I allowed him to finish the recital, and, seeing him soon after, told him that he could do what I was sure I could not, — that was, preach again the same sermon *verbatim*. He did not appear vain of his superior memory. ‘When I hear any thing great,’ he said, touching his forehead with his finger, ‘it remains there.’” What shall we say of those who despise the condition and wants of their fellow-beings, who grovel in such deep degradation, and yet, even when most benighted, possess such abilities to feel and know?

Lessing says, “Revelation is to the whole race of mankind, what education is to the individual person. Education is a revelation made to a single man; and revelation is the education of the whole race of mankind, which has taken place, and continues still to take place.” We may consider it as a training, by diversity of means, and through a succession of efforts, by wonders real and apparent, by a beautiful arrangement of the most common occurrences, as well as by an influence both hidden and divine. The spirit of Christ sympathizes with the suffering, and labors on their behalf, by sending forth its redeeming energies through tender and intelligent disciples who spring from the multitudes, can comprehend their struggles, mitigate their anguish, and supply all their wants. Hence it was not scholastic erudition, or the influence of royal station, that Christianity first employed to plant her institutions; but the fishermen, the tax-gatherer, and the tent-maker, who could replenish every vale with truth, easily understood and rapturously enjoyed; plant gospel banners on every shore, which should be seen in all directions afar; and, beginning at the lowest rank, ascend to the highest, with accents adapted to the faculties of each, and good news of great joy for all. The most industrious and most oppressed classes were first disciplined by the hopes and fears, sorrows and divine consolations, of our holy religion, that they who had suffered most and been most consoled by the heavenly treasure

they possessed, might become the instructors of the world in a loftier theology, purer morality, and brighter prospects of freedom and improvement than the world had ever before received. It was this sympathetic gospel which gave a new and unusual depth of feeling, a fulness of inward life to mankind. It imparted moral earnestness, intellectual energy, and religious fervor to the lowest grade of its subjects, and thus emancipated them from the tutelage of effete dogmas, and developed in their souls a new, living form of truth, the most dignified, and graced with all the glories of *felt* redemption, atonement, and justification before Almighty God. It was this that awoke humanity to a keener consciousness of its character, its wants, and the infinitude of heavenly supplies. In Christ earth saw, for the first time, the religion of freedom the most republican and pure—freedom toward God and toward all mankind. It is this only that can make one feel how grand a thing it is to be in perfect harmony with the infinite universe, and in perfect identity with the infinite God; to be, instead of social slaves, the agents of social emancipation; to revere none of the monstrous idols human weakness or human vanity hath set up; to bear a brow always bold and radiant, as if the smile of heaven beamed thereon; to tread the green earth with an innocent but intrepid step, not crouching to any human lord; to be effulgent in the midst of surrounding darkness, cheerful and strong before the desponding and weak; spurning, not merely fetters for ourselves, but breaking the fetters of all the oppressed; the distributors of great and regenerating ideas, as well as the prompt performers of the most commonplace duties; and, thrilled by the recollection of glorious deeds already done, and inspired by the consciousness of augmented purity and power yet in reserve, to pant for the possession of a loftier ideal of individual excellence, an unlimited prospect of universal bliss. The diviner the enjoyments we receive from Heaven, the greater is our obligation, and the warmer is our impulse to lavish them on others, that all the earth may come to share equally in our joys. The true Christian will be

untiring and impartial in the exercise of his sympathetic regards and beneficent activity, remembering the great Redeemer said, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Divine truth is the primary want of the human soul, the ground of its own emancipation, and the means of its triumph over all outward foes. The full expansion and complete donation of this highest gift God has reserved to the ultimate energies of Christian doctrine on all mankind. All virtue is the inimitable fruit of truth; and the gospel is worthy of all acceptance, because the excellence it produces is the most veracious and enduring. It is this that has traversed the tempests of so many generations, perpetually unfolding a brighter horizon to the world, regenerating its ideas, and developing the best civilization every where in its course. If we are in possession of this heavenly treasure, and, as true Christians, sympathize with the suffering when most wronged, we shall at any cost impart to them the assistance which most mitigates their sorrows and augments their strength. We have it in our power to bestow on the needy a favor the highest in the universe, and which the loftiest angel might well be ambitious to convey. This treasure is enlightening and redeeming truth, more productive than earth, more lasting than time, exalted as God, and glorious as the eternal throne. When a man gives his property, the earth he holds under his feet, it is much; nevertheless, it is the gift of something foreign to himself. When he gives his heart, it is more and better; but that heart, all precious as it may be, is the gift of something full of fickleness and mortality: a time will come when the giver will no longer be able to create even the movement necessary to make his heart a gift. But there is in a Christianized man something which, while it is in and of himself, so made by divine grace, is more than himself, something that never recedes, never changes, never dies: we may even dare to say that it is something more than immortal; it is eternal. Man is a compound of time and eternity, and it is by truth that eternity enters into his composition. Daughter of eternity, deathless herself, Truth

has descended to time by incarnating herself in the intelligence of man, and, endangered by this inhabitation of suffering from our nature, she communicates to her possessor the immunities and rights of all her original strength. While all else changes within us, even the sentiments of the heart and faculties of the mind, Truth preserves her immutable life, and, in giving her to others, we impart something that will survive ourselves, will outlast the decay of all transient things, and bloom perpetually beyond the grave, redolent of the graces gathered from every generation of time to crown the unending youth of her eternity.

Truth is every thing to the soul, while error is worse than nothing. The first is a profound well, wherein the farther it is sunk the more profusely and powerfully the water gushes; the other is a stagnant pit evaporated, or, as the Scripture says, "broken cisterns that can hold no water." The truth bestowed and fortified by divine religion, that religion which God has given to earth in Jesus Christ, is profoundly seated at the centre of humanity, like the primitive granite which supports the world; it there conceals divine fire and divine water, a fire that forever burns but to purify, a water which it is impossible to exhaust while it eternally flows. In proportion as we explore the depths of this wisdom and love, we discover new tributaries, streams unknown, reservoirs unlimited, even until we pierce to the centre, and, having given the last blow, the immortal stream of immaculate truth springs up to the skies, satisfying our thirst without extinguishing it, and raising the enraptured soul on its swelling tide even to the threshold of heaven's own temple, wherein God will crown the humble and diligent believer with all the fulness of himself. Until we reach that consummation of mental and moral bliss, we cannot expect entirely to escape from the influence of falsehood and the pangs of doubt. Whatever may be the charms of truth here below, there will always be opposed to it the charm of error; whatever may be the abundance of light, enough of clouds will always remain to obscure it. It is by faith and patience



that the checkered path through sunshine and storm is to be traversed, and the goal of shadowless glory be finally attained. Truth itself is unaffected by the vicissitudes of time. Like a pyramid immovable and unshattered, it stands amid the moving sands and desolating elements of earth; but we have only to descend to its base, in removing the dust and ruins that encumber it, and a light brighter than the sun will flash from foundation to summit, to satisfy the intelligence of all who honestly inquire, recompense their attention, and imbue them with unwasting strength.

The breath of the Almighty, as it originally vivified and inspired the human soul, compelled it, by the very nature of its attributes, to be intellectual, moral, affectionate, susceptible of happiness, and religious. Man is the same still, so far as it pleases himself; his will is free; he is a free agent. Revelation, while it has not a word of discussion on the subject of moral liberty, every where addresses itself to our race, under both covenants, as to free beings. "See," said Moses to Israel, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life!" "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death." "Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts," by the voice of Malachi. "This do and thou shalt live," were the words of Christ to the doctor of the law. Now, this will, power, liberty of man, which cannot go so far as to rob him of the cardinal properties of his nature, does often go so far as to disturb their just equilibrium, and to induce in him the cultivation of some one faculty to the detriment of others, and even so far as to subject the religious to the baser tendencies, although its legitimate province is to rule supreme in all the faculties, harmonize and approximate them to the infinite. It is the divine prerogative of truth, therefore, to restore the original sovereignty of the best powers, and the symmetrical development of all. In this matter, there is no question of more or less; freedom exists or it does not; and it

is obvious that the liberty of a rational being consists precisely in the free use of the faculties inherent in his nature, and of all his faculties or powers, without exception or extravagance. This is only saying that freedom in the lowest grade of spiritual existence, as in the highest, is strength; that a mental power is not a power except so far as it is independent. Man, renovated by divine truth, is made free in his part of the finite, as God is in the infinite; that is, he acts in his quality of man with the same independence that God acts as God. It is the redeeming power, given to the world in Christ, that impels humanity both highest and farthest; the only spur which can arouse our dormant energies, and excite them to the most beneficent action. Mental freedom is the only true freedom, the foundation of all other liberty, without which an immortal creature is a degraded slave, and not the less a vassal because his chains may chance to be made of gold.

“For what is freedom but the unfettered use  
Of all the powers which God for use hath given?”

Intellectual conception and moral appreciation are two attributes the grandest of human nature, the germs of which are lodged in every bosom. The intellectual power of man proves that there must be an object suitable for its exercise and demanding its study. This object is truth, the knowledge of something real, and consists in the exact understanding of the highest realities that exist. This is the grand boon proffered to us here and in a more exalted life. “Then shall I know,” says Paul, “even as also I am known;” that is to say, thoroughly. The apostle does not, in this instance, speak with respect to himself alone. He had just said, “Now *we see* through a glass, darkly;” and, by a lively change of phrase, familiar to his style, he suddenly passes to the first person, and says, “I shall know,” which is equivalent to *we shall know*. The force of the idea expressed in this sentence rests on the point of comparison, on the sense of the particle *as*. It is evident that, of the two principal significations of this word in

the Greek of the New Testament, viz., *as much as*, and *in the same manner as*, the last mentioned alone can be the one employed in this passage. The glorious hope which Paul expresses is, therefore, that the knowledge of immortality will embrace, not the appearances only, the mere outward manifestations of the divine laws and creations, but their perfect truth and infinite reality.

The moral faculty of man proves the existence of a law, by which each will should be governed, and to which all should have access. "Sin is the transgression of the law." "Where no law is, there is no transgression." Thus man is never without a moral law; for when he does not receive one from God he makes one to himself. But all history, sacred and profane, proves how difficult it is for man to discover, by his own unaided powers, the true law of progress, the basis of genuine morality, real justice and goodness divine. The reason of this difficulty is, that the mission of conscience is much more to apply itself to the law which it finds in force, than to discover or confer this law. Hence it often applies the rule without first comprehending it, and the benighted man conscientiously executes the most evil deeds. These are our fellow-creatures who suffer the greatest wrongs; and for us, as the professed followers of Christ, to withdraw from them our sympathies and deny them his holy word, is at once to proclaim our own hypocrisy and seal their doom.

Truth of the highest and purest form, the object given for the rescue and exaltation of our intellectual powers, is the same in all worlds; it is what God thinks, and is what we with the greatest avidity should strive to possess and distribute, since what occupies his thoughts ought to occupy those of all his creatures, according to the graduated capacities of each and the mutual welfare of all. The object given to ennoble and eternally bless our moral powers, is holiness; and this, too, is the same in all worlds: it is what God wills; and as what satisfies his will is most happily adapted to satisfy that of all his creatures, according to the measure of sensibility and moral

excellence in each, to distribute instrumentally the word that enlightens and the spirit that saves the soul of the poorest and meanest child of Adam, is to do that which confers the greatest happiness and reflects most honor upon the sons of God.

We are not to covet for ourselves, nor inculcate upon others, that demoniac spirit which springs from wrong and leads to wrong, but the sacred liberty which dwells with justice, and wages a conflict both mighty and perpetual against every form of oppression. It is that merciful and yet resolute spirit which to the last gasp of existence resists the arrogance of despots, and when its warring energies are spent, so that inevitable dissolution impends, it will, like the father of Hannibal, take the offspring it has produced to the altar of its adoration and swear them to eternal hostility against all the invaders of private rights and a public prosperity. This is

“A liberty, which persecution, fraud,  
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;  
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more:  
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,  
Bought with *His* blood, who gave it to mankind,  
And sealed with the same token. It is held  
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure  
By the unimpeachable and awful oath  
And promise of a God.”

Thirdly, Christianity, which was so fiercely persecuted when most weak, and which therefore sympathizes with the suffering when most wronged, ever fortifies the confiding with invincible strength. This grand truth is inherent in it as the doctrine of Christ, and is its crowning glory as the manifestation of his spirit and life. A just discrimination recognizes this difference between the science of religion and its practice. For analytical examination and popular communication, it is necessary to reduce Christianity to the form of *doctrine*; but for all practical purposes, in its highest influence on individuals and nations, it is animated with a more efficacious life, and always exemplifies itself under the triune majesty of essence, life, and

action. The relation Christ assumed towards fallen man; the position in which he placed mankind with reference to God; his own teachings and example, together with the declarations of the apostles to him, his person, and work, — these constitute Christian doctrine, from the highest point of which, if we would obtain a perfect view, we must pass to the manifestation of Christ as the exemplar of a newer, higher, and more perfect religious life. The essential substance of Christianity is the illustrated character of its Author, spoken to all the world, and developed in all his existence here below. Only as *life* is Christianity the light of the world; which position is based on the fact that Christ does not say, My doctrine is the truth, but, “I am the truth,” adding immediately that he also is “the life.” Christianity is not all *faith*, neither is it all *morality*, but a perfect combination of faith, love, and moral authority, forming true religion as its aggregate, from which harmonious whole the several components can as little be separated “as the light of the fire from its warmth.” The character of our Lord can never be thoroughly understood, if we regard it as consisting wholly either in outward morality or in hidden piety; since the peculiarity of his nature lay in the perfect coalescence of the two — in holiness; a life *from* and *in* God, designed in all of its infinite excellence to be diffused from himself into the world. It was this exalted capacity and unprecedented benevolence that made Christ to be something more than merely a great, pure-minded man; he possessed a superhuman, world-swaying and world-pervading influence, which no pious fiction could invent, and which could proceed only from real, living, and perfect Divinity. It is equally clear that it was the strongest desire of Christ, that his life and spirit should be shared by his disciples; that this life should be perpetuated in them, and become, through their instrumentality, the light and life of all mankind. This is most distinctly declared in the gospel, especially in the record by John. Thus Christ, himself glorified by the Father, desires to be glorified again in his disciples; they are commanded to partake of his flesh and blood, that

thereby they may receive his life ; “ that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; ” and again, “ I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou lovest them, even as thou lovest me. ” All which is God’s is Christ’s, and this divine fulness he will impart to his followers ; or, as Paul expresses the same idea in an inverted form, “ All is yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. ” This is not a creed, but Christianity, the absolute religion that came down from heaven, to be incarnated in life and action on earth, to be inculcated in the simplest forms, and eventually to reign the supreme and salutary faith of all mankind. Having conquered every foe otherwise invincible, and having ascended to the throne of the universe, thence to bestow on all believers every resource they can need, Christ says to each, I will give the power of soul unbound and purified,

“ To crown thy life with liberty and joy,  
And make thee free and mighty as I am. ”

Our holy religion never throws her choice gifts into the lap of luxurious ease and selfishness, but creates strength in the strong, purity in the pure, and wreaths a glorious garland round the brow of true heroism, as, glad, radiant, and undaunted, it bounds onward ceaselessly to vanquish every oppressor and mitigate every wrong. It is not truth smothered in musty formulas, and faith having no more stable foundation than the idle dreams of a listless brain ; but the religion of Christ, more than any other influence, deepens and fortifies in the bosoms of its adherents veneration for duty, confirms the most sacred convictions of right, arms with a power of execution equal to the most heroic resolves, kindles martyr aspirations, and urges their possessors not to live for their own puny personalities, but to offer these and every thing dearest and best on the sublime altar of progressive Humanity. Before this substantial zeal, magnanimous spirit, and luminous enthusiasm, all empty theories and

crafty schemes dissolve and disappear like morning mists before the god of day, as he rises to shine on the diffusive and resistless redemptions which spring in rapid developments round the cross of Christ, to bless all the earth.

Every man is good in proportion as he manifests the spirit of love, and great in proportion as he manifests the spirit of self-sacrifice. True religion is something more genial and vitalizing than "the patient brilliance of the moon," and is adorned with a beauty still more beautiful. It is a power, secret, sweet, precious, and profound, lending the soul swifter wings to fly, and always guiding its career to the most practical and most profitable results. The greatest works of mind or hand have always been executed in behalf of the largest masses of men and the highest glory of God. This follows, because divine truth qualifies its possessor to break spears with the brave till he quells all, enlighten the ignorant till he has reformed all, and create monuments of science, art, and religion, which, like the spirit that inspired them, shall purify the tastes, enlarge the intellects, and ennoble the aspirations of all who, at the most open and unobstructed shrines, learn to gaze and admire. The spirit of all goodness and greatness is prompt to minister to the wants of the most needy, promote the welfare of society at large, aid the changes which obviously tend to raise man to a higher order of civilization, and in every lawful way to impel the moral progress of the world. It takes the feeblest of our race, and, leading him to the summit of each mountain, thought says to him there, —

"Worship thou God; for Deity is seen  
From every elevation of the soul.  
Study the Light; attempt the high; seek out  
The soul's bright path; and since the soul is fire  
Of heat intelligential, turn it aye  
To the all-Father, source of light and life."

It is under the tuition of such sympathies and such wisdom, that the pupil of the skies, and predestined benefactor of our globe, early learns to partake, in glad and vigorous fruition, of

the Tree of Life, of which the loftiest stars are fruit, and the lightest leaf the food of still loftier power. The partaker thereof is increasingly conscious of firmer courage joined to purer affection within himself, and is willing to give all or renounce all things else, at any risk, and in view of any pain, rather than witness suffering which an effort of his own might, in some measure at least, remove; and in proportion as his life is moulded by this law, sinking his own personal advantages and enjoyments in the higher destinies of our race, he becomes truly great,—great with a grandeur kindred to that of God. His greatness is hewn from that mount of light whereon the throne of heaven's eternal love is built, and, while obeyingly he bears the cross close in the footsteps of Christ, always ascending toward the highest bliss, every act he performs is a monument of beneficence fitted to animate and sustain fellow-disciples, and every breath of his lips is the inspiration of invincible strength in every panting soul. Such heroes reproduce and multiply themselves perpetually. Every great result that has been achieved for the promotion of human weal, has had for its doer some solitary redeemer, one thrust forth from the sweet charities of social bliss, from the comforts and enjoyments to which generous hearts cling most tenderly, and, by personal experience the most bitter and lonely, is trained to win for others, like conditioned, blessings the most exquisite, exalted, and general. Their example stands out cheerfully before all successors, teaching them that the best powers are multiplied and strengthened in a marvellous degree the moment we, with stern resolve, throw ourselves on our own personal prowess and persevering endeavors. Such men are always the revolutionizers of the world, and conquer with a greater, more beneficent, more enduring potency, than the sword's edge or cannon's roar. Yet how unseen are their best energies fortified, how unostentatiously they enter upon their mission, how divine is the wide influence they exert, and how sublimely they ascend to the glories of heaven! They move through the world with a heart full of hardihood, benevolence,



and power, fanning the hot brow of mental anguish, and soothing the pangs of secret suffering, with sympathies balmy and grateful as evening zephyrs, singing the sun to repose, as down "he lays his head of glory on the rocking deep." Such benefactors of mankind burst away from all puny restraints, grasp and communicate the most comprehensive as well as important truths, and form the grand brotherhood throughout the world, who in all lands and ranks are working for the redemption and improvement of man, obeying no other law of duty than that of making the universe, material and spiritual, an increasingly glad and glorious revelation to the heart and intellect of all our race. It is their privilege and glorious reward, in common with the great Redeemer himself, to sympathize with all the suffering in their deepest wrongs, and fortify the feeblest endowments of rational existence

"With strength like that which lifts an eagle's wing  
Where the stars dazzle, and the angels sing."

All that man can be, this side of the grave or beyond, he becomes by the free use of his own faculties; by the strength he attains while emulating the strongest, by the purity he wins through admiration of the purest, and by the direction he imparts to these attributes in himself. His freedom and power are correlative, exactly proportioned to each other. The influence of Christianity is most salutary in a temporal, as well as eternal point of view; it is not a frigid semblance of usefulness, like a burning-glass of ice, but a powerful lens pouring the converged beams of universal truth upon the brain and heart. It is to the mental and moral world what aggressive civilization is to the natural, — it tends to dispel the vapor and dislodge the frost, by felling tangled forests, draining fetid marshes, and cultivating unproductive wastes, so that coming generations may breathe, without effort, the purified air, and enjoy without peril a chastened climate and the richest harvests. Its holy flames purify the temple they burn in, emancipate the intellect, regulate the passions, and exalt the soul. It

is necessary that the heart should first find repose, that the mind may be active and useful in the greatest degree. The disciples of Christ became such at the moment they obtained this rest; and in proportion to its measure and permanency, they were emancipated from the worst bonds, and remain independent in proportion as they are penetrated by the splendor and beneficence of God. Under the guidance of this spirit, and upborne by its power, even while the body stands heavy and solid on earth, as a deserted tomb, the free soul wanders from star to star in quest of that fountain of unbounded wisdom and life, which excursions are at once the sublimest luxury and the foretaste of eternal joy. Catching a dim glimpse of this, Jamblicus said, "There is a principle of the soul superior to all external nature; and through this principle we are capable of surpassing the order and systems of the world, and participating the immortal life and the energy of the sublime celestials. When the soul is elevated to natures above itself, it deserts the order to which it is a while compelled, and, by a religious magnetism, is attracted to another and a loftier, with which it blends and mingles." It is not pagan philosophy, however, that can thus inspire and invigorate the believer; it is religion, the cross of Christ, that raises patience first into a fortifying virtue, and then into undying hope. It is through the ceaseless throes and invincible struggles thus sustained, that penury wins sustenance, and whole nations of the enslaved attain the blessings of freedom which to all mankind belong. On this point Bishop Taylor well says, "The will is in love with those chains which draw us to God. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown, so, when 'the Son of God hath made us free,' and hath only subjected us to the service and dominion of the Spirit, we are free as princes within the circle of their diadem; and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and 'God's service is perfect freedom;' and the more we are subjects, the more we 'reign as kings;' and the farther we run, the easier

is our burden; and Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads, but help to motion; without them the body falls."

The faithful disciple, in the act of entire consecration, enters into perfect rest, and thenceforth, unimpeded by crippling doubts, devotes all his energies to the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom. The wisdom which in this school is attained, and the strength which in this service is employed, are the most exalted in their character, and the most divine in their results. Says one of the deepest thinkers of modern times, "No man can have been conversant with the volumes of religious biography — can have perused, for instance, the lives of Wickliffe, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Wishart, Sir Thomas More, Bernard Gilpin, Bishop Bedell, or of Egede, Swartz, and the missionaries of the frozen world, without an occasional conviction that these men lived under extraordinary influences, that in each instance, and in all ages of the Christian era, bear the same characters, and, both in the accompaniments and results, evidently refer to a common origin." That origin, we scarcely need add, is the pure spirit of primitive Christianity, whose glories will remain forever resplendent, when the meteors of science shall have fallen from the sky, and unsanctified genius withered like a flower in the icy charnel's breath. Much of the reward which conscious worth every where enjoys, comes to the soul simultaneously with the performance of its beneficent acts; but the fulness of its high fruition remains to be unfolded with the bursting glories of that eternity which commences from the grave. The spirit of Christ is the most active life, continually evoked from kingdom to kingdom, and increasingly illumined as it unceasingly ascends. It sustains, from the profoundest depths, the beings it emancipates, and arms them with invincible strength, by imbuing them thoroughly with the genius of heavenly liberty which created and made them free. If the sage of this world is to be pronounced blessed, whose heart is the home of the great dead, and their great thoughts, how much more desirable is the condition and destiny of him whose soul is the temple of divinity itself, and who, by virtue

of this possession and the deeds it has inspired, soars with unspeakable rapture, through immensity, toward that palace of the Eternal, of which our sun is but a porch-lamp.

We have seen that the inspiration which fortifies the confiding with invincible strength, which impels to the sternest conflicts, and secures the highest reward, is truth; the very essence of omnipotence, the breath of vital energy in the nostrils of the brave and good, which, as it inspires the nobly endowed, when all outward circumstances are dark and desolate, so, by its absence, is sufficient to countervail the most splendid advantages of rank or fortune. It is this that creates the true prophets of every age, the mighty teachers and doers who startle the stupid with profound and stimulating thought, rouse the injured to a horror at their wrongs, and inspire the love and practice of virtue, by the stern and zealous reiteration of those great moral principles, which are as old as man himself, which are the basis of all that is noble in his nature, and enduring as the bright deeds he was made to achieve.

This omnipotence and ineffable glory of truth is vouchsafed to man only for the purpose of promoting practical godliness. All its emanations are infinitely superior to the inertness of mere dogmas, since they are designed to make man both politically energetic and morally regenerative. Truth, in its widest development and noblest exercise, tends always to social regeneration, and bequeaths to posterity expanded conceptions of a holier gladness, and salvation more comprehensive and complete. It is truth to be proclaimed, not simply as theological doctrine, but a mighty and saving revelation, a celestial fact free for all, which ought to interfuse every thought we think, adorn every deed we do, and be allowed unobstructedly to grow, less as a mere luxury of the intellect, than the mightiest passion of the heart. It is the spirit of wisdom and holiness, prompting its subject to be a man as God originally created him, and as, in Christ Jesus, he may be formed anew. Hence will he devoutly strive to appropriate, in his own being, the good, the beautiful, and

the true, from all the universe around, seeing God in every thing, and blessing the creatures of God every where, that in this perpetual devotion to the highest aims, and approximation to the functions of Divinity itself, he may, in the noblest sense, become divine. All who have really partaken of this spirit of Christ's truth, and are truly his soldiers, demonstrate the truthfulness and grandeur of their calling by being always found on the outward frontiers of civilization, carrying light to the benighted, strength to the feeble, salvation to the lost. They are the beloved offspring of that Christianity which was fiercely persecuted when most weak, which sympathizes with the suffering when most wronged, and forever fortifies the confiding with invincible strength.

“For souls

Re-made of God, and moulded over again

Into his sunlike emblems, multiply

His might and love : the saved are suns, not earths,

And with original glory shine of God.”

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## CHAPTER IV.

### CHRISTIANITY THE DELIVERER OF THE OPPRESSED.

THE subject for our present consideration is of the greatest interest and importance. With the wisest possible blending of firmness and magnanimity, that just discrimination and equitable judgment which are obtained only in answer to humble prayer, let us proceed at once to the discussion. The following are our general points: Christianity was given to subdue the most ungenerous foes, is most merciful towards those who suffer the greatest abuse, and inspires ceaseless rebellion against every species of ungodly bonds.

In the first place, to subdue foes at once the most ungenerous and unyielding was the primary task of Christianity, and, to the end of spiritual warfare, will ever constitute its highest mission. The substance of Christ's doctrine and the grand aim of his life was in the highest degree emancipative, and most happily adapted to the diversified wants of mankind. He labored to abolish every pernicious superstition, destroy all forms of degrading unbelief, break every oppressive bond, and eradicate the skepticism of the leading men of his age, which openly denied, or industriously subverted, the foundation of morality itself. He represented God under the true light, that of a purely moral character, and portrayed him palpably to the common heart and eye as the supreme Father, loving and educating all the rational creatures he has formed. "The consequences that flow from this fundamental view are also moral. A man cannot honor this supreme Father by ceremonies and external exercises, but only by doing his *will* and endeavoring to become *like* him. With a religious truth that represents God as the supreme Father, no moral truths can be connected but such as reduce every thing back to love. The practical part of what Jesus taught, therefore, had the great excellency of containing principles not only benevolent, but pure, noble, and exalted, every where applicable, and adapted to human nature. He who loves God and man according to the precepts of Jesus, is a most willing, punctual, and disinterested performer of all his duties; a most active promoter of all that is true, beautiful, and good; a most faithful and useful citizen of the state to which he belongs; a most sympathizing and benevolent friend of man; and, in all the relations which he sustains, whatever they are called, the author of innumerable blessings. Nor did the *external part* of the religion which Jesus intended to bring into vogue, have any other object in view than strengthening its moral power and sustaining its activity. In order to preserve a lasting consciousness of their high calling and their destination in respect to moral attainments, and to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect, his followers were to meet

together and unite as a body in pious exercises ; the object of these meetings was to be their advancement in virtue and religious improvement. And for what other purpose, than as the means of moral improvement, did Jesus institute his two sacred rites ? The one was to make it evident, that as soon as a man becomes a Christian, he takes upon himself an obligation to practise the purest and most immaculate virtue ; the other was to admonish him of this with reference to his approximating nearer to the pattern of all human virtue in the performance of his duties. The religion, therefore, which Jesus destined to become that of the human race, was, in all its parts, a moral religion."

Moreover, the doctrines and spirit which Christ planted in the world were as heroical as they were moral. Nothing is more erroneous than the supposition that Christianity regards indignant bravery and heroical resistance as vices ; that, instead of their exercise on just occasions, it legitimately transforms man into a defenceless and passive creature, which chooses to endure outrageous wrongs rather than defend natural rights. It is true that the religion taught by Jesus was adapted to diminish the causes of war, prevent aggressions upon all sorts of freedom, awaken in every soul the acutest perception of what is right, and thus gradually produce universal peace upon earth. "It is equally certain," says Reinhard, "that the commandment enjoining love, which is the soul of all the precepts of Christianity, forbids no man from bravely opposing unjust oppressors, and maintaining his rights by force, so long as that universal peace does not prevail, and cruel disturbers of public security and repose, and unjust aggressors, are every where to be found. It is not the business even of that love whose efforts are directed entirely to the promotion of the general good magnanimously to offer itself in sacrifice, as soon as this general weal is in danger ? Can he whom it animates remain idle when the society of which he is a member is assailed and threatened with danger ? Will he not, on the other hand, select, and be obliged to select, the only way left him, in this

case, for exhibiting his love, namely, by laying down his life for the brethren? 1 John iii. 16. Besides, is there not every thing to be met with in the soul of a genuine Christian, from which real bravery and rational heroism may spring in as good if not a better degree than others? Is bravery grounded upon natural courage, a certain innate intrepidity? Christianity does not suppress this quality, but only hinders it from degenerating into savageness and temerity. Is genuine bravery accompanied with a contempt of all effeminacy, with diligence, and temperance? Christianity inculcates these virtues as indispensable duties. Is bravery, without a desire of honor, impossible? No one can possess a livelier and more tender sense of honor than the Christian. Does bravery draw its nourishment in a particular manner from genuine patriotism? The patriotism produced by Christianity is the noblest and most zealous that can exist. Finally, are confidence in God and a belief in immortality able to contribute any thing toward strengthening courage in danger and rendering men intrepid? Then no one has less to fear than the Christian. A religion which, with the tenderest love, combines such an aversion to all injustice, and so much to encourage in the hour of danger, cannot be prejudicial to genuine bravery, but will merely hinder it from degenerating into savage barbarity and inhuman cruelty. If, therefore, Christianity in any state produces in only a part of the citizens those dispositions and feelings which its Founder intended it should produce, even then the state, whatever be its regulations in other respects, manifestly loses nothing thereby, but, on the other hand, gains infinitely in the improvement of its subjects."

The true nature of Christian morality, and the righteous heroism which moral truth was designed to stimulate, were most clearly unfolded to the world by the teachings and example of Christ. Soon after he entered upon his ministry, he held the remarkable conversation with a Samaritan woman, in which he advanced far beyond all previous instruction, entirely laid aside the Hebrew phrase the *kingdom of God*, and, instead



of it, spoke of the worship of God in spirit and in truth, as then about to be introduced into all parts of the world, without regard to the distinctions of nation and country. John iv. 23, 24. Continues Reinhard, "The Jews expected of the Messiah the restoration of their *freedom*. Jesus promised freedom, but a freedom from the tyranny of vice, to be obtained by the power of the truth. John viii. 31—36. Shortly before his death, he conversed with his friends respecting the great work for which he had selected them, and in which they were soon to engage. For their encouragement and support, he promised them nothing but *the Spirit of truth*. This was not only to guide them, but through them to teach and reform the whole world. John xiv. 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13. Whatever we understand by this Spirit of truth, we must admit it to have been given to the apostles to prepare them for the moral undertaking, the accomplishment of which had been intrusted to their hands. I have already observed that, in the presence of Pilate, Jesus declared his kingdom to be a kingdom of truth, and not of this world, nor intended to injure the power and authority of its rulers in the least degree. That it was his intention to benefit all men by laboring in the cause of morality, is a position fully confirmed by the fact that he speaks in express terms of a new birth, an entire reformation and renovation of the heart, and, in the most direct and definite manner, declares his intention to create mankind anew and make them better. In Matt. xix. 28, he calls the new order of things which he had in contemplation a regeneration; and that this regeneration was not to be a political change nor a resuscitation of the old national constitution, he asserted in a manner worthy of the deepest attention, in the well-known dialogue which he held with Nicodemus. John iii. 1, et seq. He told the astonished scribe, with the dignity of an ambassador of God, who was conscious of being engaged in the most important business, and felt his appropriate sphere of action to be without the bounds of the corporeal world, (verses 11—13,) that a man must be renovated by the influences of a better religion

before he could be admitted into the kingdom of God, (verse 3;) that indolent human nature, altogether sunk as it was in sensuality, must experience an entirely new birth in order to become *spirit*, and awake to a higher moral life, (verses 4—6;) not that there was any lack of spiritual faculties, for they were every where in action, but that they were destitute of the proper direction. He told Nicodemus that they should now receive the proper direction by means of the new birth, under the influences of this better religion, (verse 8;) that though it would cost him his life to effect this great and universal change, yet his death should result in the salvation of all mankind, (verse 14,) for that he came to make all happy who adhered to him and were willing to be improved; to do good to all mankind without exception, (verses 15—17,) and hence that none should remain miserable but those who hated the truth, and, out of a love to vice, rejected it, (verses 18—21.) Jesus, therefore, had a new moral creation in view. His object was to animate all mankind with better life, to arouse, direct, and ennoble their spiritual faculties, and exalt the human race to a state of moral dignity and happiness. This was the kingdom of God which he had in view,—the important work which occupied his mind.”

Christianity is omnipotence armed against all perversions of divine truth, and all invasions of human rights; blended with infinite justice, it wields the spiritual sword destined never to be laid aside so long as these corruptions and tyrannies endure. It is a potency which enables its heroic subjects on earth to resist the pressure of wrong and the storms of life without timidity or defeat. They stand on a sure foundation, having partaken of that freedom wherewith Christ makes his people free; and, walking in his footsteps, they rise from sin to repentance, from repentance to faith, from faith to sanctification, from sanctification to salvation, a lofty height, whence they look down with pity upon all who suffer, and with avenging scorn upon tyranny of every degree. Each good soldier of Christ feels that he has been fashioned after the nature and

capacities of an all-embracing, creative, and loving intelligence, a rational and godlike type of humanity, to exemplify every virtue, antagonize against every vice, and, for the glory of the Creator, as well as the welfare of all immortal creatures, live and die a moral Spartacus among mankind.

The only justification which tyranny is wont to plead in extenuation of its wrongs is, the right of possession; "I have ruled, therefore I rule; I have exercised this power, therefore I exercise it still." Thus it is

"The queen of slaves,  
The hoodwinked angel of the blind and dead,  
*Custom*, with iron mace, points to the graves  
Where her black standard desolately waves."

But Christ unfurled a fairer banner to the world, and made innovation upon all forms of established iniquity, all ranks of oppressive men, the grand feature of his religion, and the true glory it imparts to progressive humanity every where. Christ came to qualify all persons to govern themselves, and to bestow on each the qualities requisite to a safe and beneficent exercise of this high prerogative. True republicanism is not agrarian, but Christian; it is an equal division of rights, not of property. It creates and adorns a nobility both original and true, "the Corinthian capital of society," in the highest sense; and not the pernicious aristocracy which is not merely itself radically corrupted, but the most powerful and vile agent of corruption. Such are the hereditary nobles, whom Burke described as being "swaddled, and rocked, and dandled into legislators;" the mere puppets of craft and power, who, by the inanimate possession of a mere casualty, are allowed to prescribe laws of a most fearful influence on innumerable beings of a rational and immortal nature.

The right of self-government, with all its attendant immunities, is a consideration which Christianity proffers as its first gift to every soul oppressed, at once the best solace and the greatest strength. It is an idea which has no affinity to des-

potism, and can never enter into an argument for the oppressor. "He can only allege the right of the strongest, which, in the very nature of moral reasoning, can never be any right at all. Be it once granted that all are universally competent to practise self-government, the tyrant is stripped of his plea, the usurper must be dumb in his own justification, and the monarch must abdicate his throne, how ancient soever the tyranny that upholds it, or live in a state of lawless and adulterous union with Power."

As the word *just*, or *righteous*, has an absolute signification, so the word *free* has but one meaning, and admits of no qualified sense in any comparative degrees. An action is right or wrong; a government is free or oppressive; Christianity is republican or despotic. "If it leave every man in the possession of his native liberty, it is free; if it deplete upon and circumscribe that liberty in the least degree, it is arbitrary and oppressive. No circumstances can alter the nature of justice; none can palliate the severity and wrong of despotism. As justice is practicable under all circumstances, because it has its foundation in the nature and constitution of man, so is self-government, his ability for which is in like manner predicated upon his moral attributes; and the universal practicability of self-government is no more to be questioned than the universal practicability of private morals." Hence we may add, that a treatise on political or religious doctrines, which adopts all the various forms of government as equally legitimate and Christian, simply because they have all at some time, or in some place, been actually reduced to practice, is as absurd as any despairing plea of infidelity which sanctions all usages and practices alike. But this is not the prevailing spirit and tendency of those institutions, through which Christ designed to place the common enjoyments of life within the reach of all, to make instructive books and ennobling education to be accessible to the most obscure, and attainable to the feeblest mind; to spur forward inventive genius to that perfection which will bring literature, art, and science within the

means of the indigent, resting for the best success upon the number, rather than the rank, of their patrons; leaving unobstructed to merit every station in society, to interpose the broadest and most prolific domain; every where and always tending to promote "the greatest good of the greatest number." These are the ends which republican Christianity proposes to itself; no exterminating war but that of reason and love against blind force; no destruction but that of tyranny; no division but that of universal and heaven-descended rights; no supremacy but the permanent dominion of just principles, the dignity and glory of true righteousness. It was by the irresistible power of these influences that Christianity came to subdue the most ungenerous foes, and in proportion as they prevail over the vices and oppressions of our world, the prophet's dream will be realized, when

"Sovereign law, the state's collected will,  
O'er thrones and globes elate  
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill."

Secondly, Christianity is most merciful towards those who suffer the greatest abuse. Its immediate office and ultimate design is, to crown all social institutions with the highest freedom, and teaches every where that each individual has the same right to be independent that a nation has. As comprehended in the great law of moral obligation expounded and exemplified by our Savior, the duties we owe as citizens are merely a part of our duties "as neighbors," which implies that the whole family of man are both competent and bound to sustain and discharge the duties of free citizens of a free commonwealth. No book ever written makes us so sensible as the Christian revelation of the dignity of man as man, and the frivolity of all those temporary or accidental distinctions with which the world has been so long oppressed. The time, place, and circumstances of Christ's advent are all significant of the true nature of the religion he came to diffuse on earth. He did not say that he was a Jew, that he had appeared to glorify

a particular people, and establish dynasties more splendid and enduring than the power of David and Solomon. He said simply, "I am the Son of man," never taking to himself even the title "Son of God;" as if he was anxious in every form to teach the great and fundamental principle of his life and doctrines, that, next to the name of God, nothing is more grand than the name of man, nothing more efficacious to procure succor, honor, and fraternal regard. The ancient law was the incarnation of a threefold inhumanity, manifested in the sacrifice of the feeble to the strong, the many to the few, and the enmity of every man toward his brother. But the royal law of love, given to the world in Christian institutions, is directly opposite — the protection of the feeble against the strong, the many against the few, and the love of all for each. It was this gospel that the apostles were commanded to go forth and "preach to every creature." The propagation, distribution, universality of divine truth became the perpetual order of the day to every disciple, and in the place of selfishness and oppression, unbounded charity and love came to reign. It was redeeming truth whose perfection was to be kindled before the eyes of all, that even down to the most inferior ranks, condemned before to vegetate in a shameful and almost invincible barbarism, vitalizing heat and light might descend, to sustain the most depressed and enlighten the most benighted. Lycurgus deemed it a great privilege to consult the oracle at Delphi, and Numa is fabled to have rejoiced to take counsel of the nymph Egeria; but Christianity gratuitously proffers wider sources of purer wisdom, from which the most destitute may derive the inspirations of sovereign justice, and be invested with a panoply of invincible strength. Thus enlightened and fortified, the victim of human injustice, coming to comprehend his just relations to the Almighty, and the rights connected therewith, says to himself and his comrades in affliction, —

"Why should we be tender,  
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threaten us,  
Play judge and executioner all himself?"

Christianity protects all human feebleness against all inhuman force, all purity against corruption, all modesty against insolence ; it protects the tenderest plant against the most stubborn, the vassal against the lord, the cabin against the palace. The English Magna Charta has been much praised, because of the improved rights wrested from King John. But the victory at Runnymede was for the advantage of the barons only ; the masses of the common people were left by it just where they were before. It is the influence of the cross alone that unfolds the basis of public welfare as well as personal security ; let the masses but see the simplicity and feel the power of this, and, with free minds in bodies disenthralled, they will not vote Barabbas especial immunities while, blinded by priestly prejudice, and craftily impelled by despotic power, they send Jesus to be crucified. There is no hope for the world, except as the feeling of true Christian brotherhood guides and adorns the influence of its master minds. Not unfrequently they are distinguished for arbitrary political doctrines, or religious infidelity, which lead their possessors to consolidate the despotism of a few to the most effectual injury of the many. Gibbon and Voltaire attacked the foundations of the Christian faith, while they prostituted history to the dishonor of popular rights. Hume labored in defence of English tyranny ; and Mitford attempted to dignify the monarchs of Persia and Macedon at the expense of the republic of Minerva, whose history is the brightest glory of ancient intellect. As these pets of aristocratic and regal power perverted their fine talents to bolster up the tyranny of the eighteenth century, so Alison yet lives with tinsel show to decorate the insufferable toryism of the present age.

“Thou bane of liberal knowledge, nature’s curse !  
 Parent of misery, pampered vice’s nurse !  
 Plunging, by thy annihilating breath,  
 The soul of Genius in the trance of death,  
 Unbounded Power ! beneath thy baleful sway  
 The voice of Freedom sinks in dumb decay.”

The free spirit of Christianity quickens and elevates the soul by a consciousness of its innate capacities and glorious destiny, making proselytes who are independent because they are intelligent, and who never surrender their wills, their responsibility, to an earthly master. Under its influence, man no longer grovels in the dust beneath imperial frowns, but walks erect and unterrified, himself the lord of creation, with eyes raised to that heaven whence comes the only authority he obeys, and whither tend all the aspirations of his heart. He is a free agent; thinks, speaks, acts for himself; claims to enjoy the fruits of his own industry; follows the career most genial to his own taste, and persists in maintaining for all others the same inalienable right; lives peaceably under laws which he has assisted to form, and dies at length, having never intentionally caused suffering in a single fellow-being, but achieved much to promote the happiness of all. Earth is blest with their existence, and when the beneficent depart from sublunary scenes, it is with spontaneous joy and a natural ascent they rise in a loftier degree to imbibe the freedom of that city of God, which they have long enjoyed, and which is indeed a city of refuge to the just, and their appropriate award. To them, religion is the highest harmony, and most thrilling power, like the majestic organ-notes that forever resound through heaven. It nerves their faculties, exalts their ambition, and mingles in the "cup of trembling," which every human lip must taste, many ingredients that most happily mitigate anguish and enliven hope.

Said Bolingbroke, "Liberty is to the collective body what health is to every individual body. Without health, no pleasure can be tasted by man; without liberty, no happiness can be enjoyed by society." But this spirit of freedom, which is so essential to the promotion of personal worth and social progress, is often destroyed or sorely crippled by those who ungenerously strive to dim its light in the souls of their fellow-men. Were it not that, to defend and perpetuate the best interests of humanity, God raises up, in every rank and age,



heroes who feel great truths and dare to tell them, and whose words seem winged with angels' wings, purifying the air they winnow, and scattering light and strength in all their flight, we should indeed fear that tyranny at last, by some fearful combination of nefarious powers, might succeed in blotting the bannered constellations from Freedom's skies. Of such a result, however, there is little occasion for fear, since we know,

“That there are spirit-rulers of all worlds,  
Which fraternize with earth, and, though unknown,  
Hold in the shining voices of the stars  
Communion on high, ever and every where.”

We do not believe that man on earth is doomed to perpetual slavery in any form. Christianity plants in the heart a sublime idea, a celestial sentiment, potent enough to redeem every individual and bless the world. It makes its recipients not disciples merely, but prophets to teach and redeemers to rescue from bondage all their fellow-sufferers. It sends them forth completely armed with an invulnerable panoply, commissioned to avoid no peril and shrink from no pain which the advocacy in word or action may require. They encompass the earth, fortified with the energies and exhilarated with the beatitudes of heaven, that they may elevate the remotest victim of oppression, and make all nations a band of brethren joined. The source of this unique and ennobling influence it is easy to trace. In Christ was born the rising genius of all those revolutions through which progressive humanity advances to the full possession of its highest rights and widest glories. From age to age, his ideas become acts, his principles grow into combats with every form of oppression, and his disciples prove their vital relation to himself by becoming at all hazards the emancipators of mankind.

The chief forms of government that prevailed in ancient times were, the autocratic, or the rule of a despot; the theocratic, or sway of a priestly corporation; and the aristocratic, or dictation of a select and privileged few. The three great

vices that predominated in connection with these were, sensual indulgence, religious ostentation, and the cruelties of war. When Christ arose, he did not meddle with governments as such, not because he was indifferent to the injuries they inflicted, but because any thing like political action would have defeated the mission on which he came. Neither did he assail antagonistically, and apart from the political institutions with which they were connected, the great evils we have named; but he overthrew them more effectively, by teaching positive and universal principles, whose operation would lead to their inevitable destruction. He assailed sensual enjoyments by teaching spiritual purity and elevation; he assailed empty religious show by exciting practical religious feeling; he assailed tyrannous war by inculcating fraternal peace. Such instructions then, as now, were much needed, and in all the progress of moral reform they will ever be the most triumphant. "The idea of the just is one of the glories of human nature; man perceives it at first, but he perceives it only as a light glimmering in the deep night of primitive passions; he sees it perpetually violated, and every moment obliterated, by the necessary disorder resulting from conflicting passions and interests." Never had this latent perception of the true and the good become so dim in the soul of man, as under the oppressions he bore eighteen centuries ago. Then the universal sway of arbitrary power, after having chained the nations to its grandeur, held them bound to its humiliations, and, for the first time in the history of the human race, liberty had no asylum on the earth. At this critical moment Christ came, and ever since Truth has had her Maccabees in the world, to preside with brave purity at public altars, and kindle holy joys on every domestic hearth. At the moment Cato of Utica despaired of human welfare and committed suicide, Jesus Christ sent his apostles to announce the gospel of life and peace to every creature, and plant in their faith, their love, and adoration, the empire of equitable justice and ennobling truth. If, therefore, Christ did not single out some local evil for particular attacks, and if he did not

revolutionize a single existing government, he did what was infinitely better ; he planted a republican church amongst mankind, thenceforth to be a perpetual Pharos, the source whence should emanate principles mighty and beneficent to renovate and save the world.

Says Dr. Channing, " History and philosophy plainly show to me in human nature the foundation and promise of a better era, and Christianity concurs with these. The thought of a higher condition of the world was the secret fire which burned in the soul of the great Founder of our religion and in his first followers. That he was to act on all future generations, that he was sowing a seed which was to grow up and spread its branches over all nations, this great thought never forsook him in life and death. That under Christianity a civilization has grown up containing in itself nobler elements than are found in earlier forms of society, who can deny ? Great ideas and feelings, derived from this source, are now at work. Amidst the prevalence of crime and selfishness, there has sprung up in the human heart a sentiment or principle unknown in earlier ages, an enlarged and trustful philanthropy, which recognizes the rights of every human being, which is stirred by the terrible oppressions and corruptions of the world, and which does not shrink from conflict with evil in its worst forms. There has sprung up, too, a faith, of which antiquity knew nothing, in the final victory of truth and right, in the elevation of men to a clearer intelligence, to more fraternal union, and to a purer worship. This faith is taking its place among the great springs of human action, is becoming even a passion in more fervent spirits. I hail it as a prophecy which is to fulfil itself. A nature capable of such an aspiration cannot be degraded forever. Ages rolled away before it was learned that this world of matter which we tread on is in constant motion. We are beginning to learn that the intellectual, moral, social world has its motion too, not fixed and immutable, like that of matter, but one which the free will of men is to carry on, and which, instead of returning into itself, like the earth's orbit, is to stretch

forward forever. This hope lightens the mystery and burden of life. It is a star which shines on me in the darkest night; and I should rejoice to reveal it to the eyes of my fellow-creatures."

If, then, any one asks, "Why should we pity and help the poor man?" let us answer in the language of the same philanthropic writer, "Because he is A MAN; because poverty does not blot out his humanity; because he has your nature, your sensibilities, your wants, your fears; because the winter wind pierces him, and hunger gnaws him, and disease racks and weakens him, as truly as they do you. Place yourself, my friend, in his state; make yourself, by a strong effort of thought, the inhabitant of his unfurnished and cold abode, and then ask why you should help him. He is a man, though rags cover him, though his unshorn hair may cover his human features,—a member of your family, a child of the same Father, and, what is most important, he not only has your wants and feelings, but shares with you in the highest powers and hopes of human nature. He is a man in the noblest sense, created in God's image, with a mind to think, a conscience to guide, a heart which may grow warm with sentiments as pure and generous as your own. To some this may seem declamation. There are some who seldom think of or value *man as man*. It is man born in a particular rank, clad by the hand of fashion and munificence, moving in a certain sphere, whom they respect. Poverty separates a fellow-being from them, and severs the golden chain of humanity. But this is a gross and vulgar way of thinking, and religion and reason cry out against it. The true glory of man is something deeper and more real than outward condition. A human being, created in God's image, and, even when impoverished by vice, retaining power *essentially the same with angels*, has a mysterious importance, and his good, where it can be promoted, is worthy the care of the proudest of his race. . . .

"Next to the great doctrine of immortal life, we may say that the most characteristic element of our religion is that of

UNIVERSAL CHARITY. And the doctrine of immortality and the duty of charity are not so separate as many may think ; for love or benevolence is the spirit of the eternal world, the temper which is to make us blest beyond the grave, and to give us hereafter the highest enjoyment of the character and works of our Creator. There is another view by which it appears that the Christian doctrine of immortality blends with and sustains charity ; for, according to this doctrine, all men are to live forever, Christ died for all, all are essentially equal, and the distinctions of their lives are trifles. Thus it is seen that the poor are recommended with an infinite power to the love and aid of their brethren. No man can read the New Testament honestly, and not learn to measure his religion chiefly by his benevolence. If the spirit, and example, and precepts of Jesus Christ have not taught us to love our fellow-creatures, we have no title whatever to the name and the hope of Christians. If we have not learned this lesson, we have learned nothing from our Master. About other things Christians may dispute, but here there can be no controversy. Charity is a duty placed before us with a sunlike brightness. It comes to us from the lips, the life, the cross of our Master ; and if charity be not in us, then Christ does in no degree live within us, then our profession of his religion is a mockery, then he will say of us in the last day, — ‘I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I know you not. Depart.’ ”

There can be no doubt that, by enforcing the principles of Christianity in all their comprehensiveness and power, we must effectually uproot and destroy oppression of every form ; because the gospel is most opposed to slavery, and is directly antagonistic to the most fearful curse of earth, the spirit which enslaves, and which too habitually dwells in us all. But it is a most inhuman and unchristian spirit, be it found in individuals or commonwealths. We hear much about “Christian states.” A bold and free writer of England asks, “Can any one point out, upon the whole face of the earth, a real Christian state or

government? No form of authority which recognizes slavery in a community can be entitled to that appellation; for I think it must at all events be admitted, that whatever else may be disputable in Christianity, there is one principle belonging to it which stands out most prominent in its character; and that is, to 'do unto others as we would that they should do unto us.' There is no rule in Christianity which can justify me in making my fellow-creature a slave. No man is *desirous* of being a slave, except perhaps under very particular and extraordinary circumstances. Unhappily there are conditions of life which generate this wish. I can, for instance, imagine in this country a laborer, poor and old; his days are now declining toward the shades of night and death; his form is wasted by many successive years of toil, and by exposure to a variety of hardships; his strength fails him; his muscles and bones refuse to do the bidding of a mind which would still, if it could, task them for more and more toil. Such a man, probably, in the bitterness of his heart, with only the prospect of a removal from his wretched hovel to the yet more repulsive poorhouse, and from that to the cold grave,—why, he might, in the agony of his soul, wish to Heaven that he had been a slave, in which case there would at least have been the condition imposed upon his master of preserving him from nakedness and starvation in his latter days. Show me institutions and their administration which can produce such a feeling as this in the human heart, and what a mass of wretchedness on the one hand, and abuse of authority on the other, will you find in that state of society! But, apart from this or any other extreme case, every man recoils from the notion of slavery. It cannot be a thing which he would 'wish to be done unto him;' and if, therefore, Christianity be brought into the question,—for the rule in the New Testament applies to the state as well as to individuals,—the man must stand self-condemned and convicted of inconsistency, who wishes to make others slaves, or to keep them in such a degraded condition if they are so already."

Every community in which provision is not made for the

destitute, and in which a single individual is deprived of the necessary elements of social existence, either is not yet a Christian community, or has ceased to be so. Of the primitive believers in our holy and beneficent religion it is said, "Neither was any among them that lacked." But alas! to how many of their successors in the sacred profession might not the reproach of the ascended Redeemer to the church at Ephesus be justly addressed: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love,"—charity, or merciful attention to the wants of the most abused. Individual liberty, the unconstrained privilege of private judgment and public worship, the human and divine illegality of slavery in all its forms, are principles so profoundly Christian, and so preëminently consecrated by the gospel, that their absolute violation would soon render Christian society impossible. The comparative inefficiency of the modern church results from the fact that the greatest wrongs do yet exist in modified forms, and which Christianity was divinely appointed completely to destroy. Man was made to go forth freely from his own home, armed with the implements of honest industry, to enjoy unmolested the fruits of his own toil on his own domain. There is but one definition of a slave; and that is, a being who has no rightful possession of earth's soil, no just compensation for the labor of his hands, or no suitable sphere and motives for the exercise of his mind. Delegate to a few favored ones the power to possess, represent, and govern these invaluable blessings, and what would remain but universal servitude, hunger, thirst, and misery the most abject, marshalled under the scourge of unfeeling despots, the infernal presumption and tyranny of whom it is impossible adequately to describe! Then man, the image of God himself, is debased to a helot crushed under the heel of a human wretch; earth flies from beneath, heaven from above, and there remains to the victim no other glory than to hang joyless in the vacuum between, to please an individual tyrant, and shame the passive indignation of abused mankind.

Jesus Christ rendered the poor necessary as well as useful to the rich, and made man every where the proprietor of himself and all the worth of his toil, by procuring for every rank and condition of our race the undoubted right to share equally in the privileges of the purest freedom and the unobstructed sources of the highest life. If any one demands on what page of the gospel slavery is positively condemned and abolished, we answer, that it is not upon any one page, but upon all ! Jesus Christ never spoke a single word that was not the condemnation of servitude, which broke not every link of all the chains ever imposed on humanity. When he entitled himself *the Son of man*, he emancipated all mankind ; when he commanded each one to love his neighbor as himself, he recognized in every mortal a brother, and made him a fellow-citizen, beloved and free ; when he chose fishermen, tax-gatherers, and tent-makers for his apostles, he broke down all distinctions of proud rank, by levelling all up to a divine standard, and degrading none ; when he died for all without distinction, he delivered all without exception, and constituted the involuntary servitude of rational creatures redeemed by his blood thenceforth to be the deepest disgrace and most damning crime. It is our consolation to know that the eye of Christ is upon the victim as he groans under abuse, drags his fetters, or bleeds under the lash ; that he experienced all this in his own person, subjected for a season to like tyrants, and that in due time he will righteously avenge the infinite wrong.

The illegality of all tyranny, whether of one or of several, and of all privileges legally guarantied to a particular class ; the chimera of the rights of birth ; the injustice of an unequal division of family property ; and all such questions of social order or individual rights, — cease to be doubtful the moment Christianity is allowed to be arbiter and judge. There is always something the most anti-Christian and diabolical in the religious pretexts by which, even in our day, attempts are sometimes made to protect and defend them. The gospel sets out from the principle of brotherhood and equality throughout



the whole family of man, and might easily have applied this principle to the knowledge of truth, thus showing that this is a common right. But the Savior knew that it was much better to overturn the bushel than formally to discuss the pretexts which had caused the light to be hidden under it; consequently this was his mode of procedure, and, from the very commencement of his reign, placed every kind of teaching at the disposal and within the reach of all. Christ, who understood man perfectly, and who was God manifested most divinely in the institutions he planted on earth, knew that entire freedom of thought and action is the only system favorable to human progress; and the gospel has ever invited the world to follow that course with such glad distinctness, that it is impossible to deny or disguise the fact, without the greatest disgrace to him who makes the attempt, and the most frightful dishonor to Christianity thus maligned.

Christianity was given to subdue the most ungenerous foes, and is most merciful toward those who suffer the greatest abuse. Having said sufficiently, perhaps, on these two points, let us proceed to remark, —

Thirdly, that it is the highest and most salutary prerogative of this heavenly power to inspire ceaseless rebellion against every species of ungodly bonds. The fable of Tantalus is the history of the human race, so far as they are deprived of the redeeming and satisfying influence of Christian doctrine. The mighty want is perpetually felt, and the prayer for redemption springing naturally from the popular heart is the cry of the captive lifting up his chains, and seeking for a link where he may most easily break them. It was to meet and satisfy this universal need that Christ appeared. He became a member of the human race, mingled with the multitude, was seen and known of all, member of a family, citizen of a country, believer in a religion, participated in all our experience, laid the foundation for consummate human progress, and gave to the masses of every land the amplest means for obtaining perfect freedom and eternal life. Christianity creates the noblest

heroes, by engaging the best thoughts of most earnest men, and by giving birth to deeds the most beneficent and sublime. While these remain, it will be hard for the world to be whiffled out of its own independent reason and indisputable rights by a handful of selfish legislators and bigoted priests. A great battle is soon to be fought, and will surely end in auspicious victory, because those who obtain the triumph deem it no derogation from their dignity to be magnanimous and just in their warfare, to consult the highest oracle of truth, and to bow in allegiance only to its response.

Up to the time of the Christian era, as has been the case too much since, mankind were considered as a herd of deer which the privileged classes were to employ to gratify their lusts, or which they were at pleasure to hunt down for spite or sport, as liked them best. But resistance to such aggressions is an instinct wisely kept alive even in the brute creation.

“To whom do lions cast their gentle looks ?  
 Not to the beast that would usurp their den.  
 Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick ?  
 Not his that spoils her young before her face.  
 Who ’scapes the lurking serpent’s mortal sting ?  
 Not he that sets his foot upon her back.  
 The smallest worm will turn when trodden on ;  
 And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.”

This is true to nature ; and with equal verisimilitude Diogenes is represented as saying to his great pupil, Plato, “ Is it no evil that truth and beneficence should be shut out at once from so large a portion of mankind ? Is it none when things are so perverted, that an act of beneficence might lead to a thousand acts of cruelty, and that one accent of truth should be more pernicious than all the falsehoods that have been accumulated since the formation of language, since the gift of speech ? I have taken thy view of the matter ; take thou mine. Hercules was called just and glorious, and worshipped as a deity, because he redressed the grievances of others. Is it unjust, is it inglorious, to redress one’s own ? If that man rises high in

the favor of the people, high in the estimation of the valiant and the wise, high before God, by the assertion and vindication of his holiest law, who punishes with death such as would reduce him or his fellow-citizens to slavery, how much higher rises he who, being a slave, springs up indignantly from his low estate, and thrusts away the living load that intercepts from him what even the reptiles and insects, what even the very bushes and brambles of the roadside, enjoy !”

Undoubtedly there is great danger of inculcating extravagant notions with respect to the great evils of our age ; but perhaps the greatest danger of all lies in being ultra against ultraism. We should never forget, in the language of a living English writer, that “the world is in a transit from one set of extremes to another ; from the extreme of ignorance to that of knowledge ; from the extreme of servility to that of independence ; from the extreme of bigotry to that of mental freedom ; from the extreme of war and oppression to that of peace and justice. All the world’s liberators and reformers have gone to extremes, and by that served humanity. The suggestion of independence for the United States of America was an extreme proposal, which horrified all timid and compromising men. The reformation of Luther was an extreme movement. He offended all the more moderate of the reformers by what they deemed his violence. What was the Founder of Christianity himself but a propounder of extreme opinions, as they appeared to the established formalists and religionists of his day ? Every great and good movement in the world has been for a time regarded as extreme. Extreme thought is generally the most far-going thought of the time in which it is uttered, and therefore it is most likely to be the true thought ; for it goes deeper into the reality and farther into futurity than any other. O, it is not your extreme, but your compromising people who do the mischief, and indefinitely retard the good. Those who trim between party and party ; who coquet with both sides ; who would have a little of the right and good, but not too much of it ; who forget that in politics we have to deal not so much with

principles as with interests, and that it is not that people do not see and know, but that they have their own advantages to gain by holding on in a corrupt course ; compromisers of their own thought ; patchers-up of something to last their time ; willing mixers of clay with the pure gold into a mongrel Nebuchadnezzar's image for false worship, — O, these men are ever the traitors to improvement, and work more enduring damage than its worst enemies.”

Christ declared that he was not come to bring peace, but a sword, a war terrible and grand beyond the conception of imagination. It begins in the individual, where it produces the mightiest conflict, and thence extends into society at large, where it augments its force and works the most radical revolutions. The predestined mission of Christianity, before achieving its final results, will be sure to excite commotions throughout the whole mass of humanity the most profitable and profound. Its great Author would most effectually improve the world by placing the leaven *in* it, and by causing this vital and transforming power to spread out its redeeming and sanctifying influence through all the ramifications of society, and all the relations of life ; proving that there is no capacity of mind which it does not enlarge, and no social relation which it does not ennoble ; spreading refinement of manners and delicacy of thought, rendering individuals more polished, and nations more happy, by banishing from the world every thing calculated to intimidate, intrall, or offend. Says the apostle, “ We preach Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” This passage, confirmed by the whole New Testament, teaches that the great design of all the doctrines and precepts of the gospel is to exalt the character, to promote eminent purity of heart and life, and to make man every where intelligent and free, “ perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.” If Christianity did not, in specific terms, command the master to free his slaves, and the despot to descend from his infamous throne, it formed its alphabet of such simple and yet sublime truths

with respect to the paternal character of God, and our mutual relations as fellow-mortals, that no one can mistake the highest requisitions, and be either bigoted or tyrannical, and yet a true disciple of the great Redeemer.

As the last and grandest collision between the powers of light and darkness draws near, wicked passions will grow more boisterous and threats most severe. A reign of terror may prevail for a while, when the heroes of freedom will have to speak and write with the fetters of turnkeys gaping for their limbs, and the minions of despotism impatient to "slip the slave's handcuffs on, and snap the lock." Free discussion is what unprincipled dictators always most fear, since the wisdom of God has so constituted things that the mass of mankind, instructed as was originally designed, should always be able to resist oppression; and the injurious know very well that they could not long inflict popular injustice with impunity, if the people are permitted to comprehend the will of God and their own inalienable rights. But when "padlocks for our lips are forging," every true Christian man will feel that then, above all other emergencies, "silence is crime." Said Burke, "Oppression makes wise men mad; but the distemper is still the madness of the wise, which is better than the sobriety of fools." It is that wise and beneficent zeal which transforms rights into might, and might into rights, happily rectifying and sustaining each other. It melts away the clogging icebergs from the stream of life, disperses dark and depressing thoughts, and disintralls the world.

"It is thus we feel,  
With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,  
Each others' rights and wrongs; thus are we men."

Says Christ, "The truth shall make you free." But the real disciples of this truth never suppose themselves like Noah, who awoke from his wine, and immediately prophesied. They do not deceive themselves nor flatter others that they

are free, because they may have written on a sheet of paper the word liberty, and posted it at the corners of the streets. True Christian freedom is not a placard on a dead wall, or an empty word on indifferent lips. It is a living and holy power, the protection of the feeble, instruction of the benighted, fairest adornment of the domestic hearth, complete disenthralment of all the oppressed, only guaranty of public health and perpetual progress. It was once disputed whether persons of a different color from Europeans ought to be considered as having a lawful claim to the immunities of men; but Christianity, pouring light upon their foreheads, and revealing the superscription of God thereon, has forever silenced that discussion. If civil tyranny and bigoted craft shall for a short time longer combine their infernal machinations to destroy the privileges which belong to every human soul, their time is short; both will soon sink on the fiery billows of eternal ruin, as they richly deserve, even as a vulture and a snake, outspent, drop, twisted in inextricable fight, into a shoreless sea.

In an age of most degraded barbarism, man came to be estimated so low as to have a pecuniary price put upon him; he was bought and sold as a common chattel, to abolish which infamous traffic, it was necessary that God himself should be sold for thirty pieces of silver. That execrable bargain was the pledge of emancipation for every poor, deserted, stripped, and lacerated slave. The Almighty would show to the universe that he never formed the limbs of his children to be chafed with fetters, nor their souls to be murdered by base servitude. To this end, through the gospel of his Son, he gave to the world an entirely new element, one which imparts worth, health, and growth to all the rest, and without which they can have but a brief and comparatively useless being in the minds, hearts, and characters of men; and that element is *independence*—personal, political, and moral. This gives strength to virtue, intensity of feeling as the mainspring of upright principle in every soul, and blends the greatest public

reformations with the every-day aspirations of private life. It resembles a vigorous though obscure tree, upon which the sun shines and the rains fall, which puts forth its ample foliage in the summer, and preserves its vitality unrestrained by wintry storms for another spring, which, despite all vicissitudes, gives its shade and fruit to all in the proper season, and is even more deeply rooted and rendered more prolific by freezing sleet and howling storms.

We must not shrink from the approach of moral tempests, because the agitation they produce may threaten to be great. When the tyranny of ages is to be heaved off the popular breast that it may breathe freely, when outraged humanity starts up to a full consciousness of its rights and dignity, it is not in the law of Providence or nature of man that the boon desired should be easily won.

“Great evils ask great passions to redress them,  
And whirlwinds fittest scatter pestilence.”

“Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof,” sang Deborah. Was it that she called to mind any personal wrongs, rapine, or insult, that she, or the house of Lapidoth, had received from Jabin or Sisera? No: she had dwelt under her palm-tree in the depth of the mountain. But she was a mother in Israel; and with a mother’s heart, and with the vehemence of a patriot’s love, she had shot the fire of love from her eyes, and poured the blessings of love from her lips, on the people that had *jeopardied their lives unto the death* against the oppressors; and the bitterness awakened and borne aloft by the same love she precipitated in curses on the selfish and coward recreants who “*came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*” Well will it be if many who profess to be the disciples, and even the authorized teachers of Christianity do not justly incur all that is frightful in this truly awful malediction.

Danby has painted a picture which represents the "opening of the sixth seal." The heavens are receding; mountains are rending; earth is on fire; wealth, honors, power, are gone; and blank despair seizes every class of mankind, save a poor bondman, who alone stands upright, his chains broken, and his hands with gratitude raised to heaven. Others sink to a frightful prison; but, thank God, he is free! Let us not wait till that fearful day, but now boldly strive,

"Until IMMORTAL MIND  
Unshackled walks abroad,  
And chains no longer bind  
*The image of our God; —*

"Until no captive one  
Murmurs on land or wave,  
And, in his course, the sun  
Looks down upon no SLAVE!"



## CHAPTER V.

### CHRISTIANITY THE REWARDER OF THE SACRIFICED.

IN the first part of this comprehensive discussion, we considered the republican character of Jesus Christ; and, in the second, the republican spirit of the primitive church. In this third part, devoted to the analysis of the republican influence of Christian doctrine, we have already portrayed Christianity as being the solace of the obscure, patron of the aspiring, fortifier of the weak, and deliverer of the oppressed. It remains, in this concluding chapter, to show that our holy religion is not only the best inspiration of heroical goodness, but an adequate and eternal rewarder of the sacrificed. To this end we will consider the following leading points: Christianity has ever been the fairest and foremost victim of tyranny, the mightiest antagonist to every form of injustice, and the most glorious rewarder of all devotees for her sake sacrificed.

In the first place, the fairest and foremost victim of tyrannous hate has ever been the divine religion which Christ imbodyed and exemplified on earth. He came to destroy all local religions, with their exclusive privileges, and to open the fountains of a purer, more efficacious, and diffusive faith for all mankind. This he avowed at the opening of his ministry, and constantly reiterated up to the close of his earthly career. Just before his sacrifice, he openly affirmed in the temple “‘that the kingdom of God was to be taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles,’ (Matt. xxi. 43. Mark xii. 9. Luke xx. 16,) and went so far as to clothe his predictions with various instructive narratives, (Matt. xxii. 1—14.) Now, how could the Jews have been rejected, and the heathen substituted in

their stead, without the introduction of an order of things new, and entirely different from the former? When Jesùs first sent out his disciples with a commission to excite the attention of their fellow-citizens to his enterprises, he did not conceal from them, in the least degree, the fact that their calling was a very dangerous one, (Matt. x. 16,) and the business intrusted to them greatly detested, (Matt. x. 22.) He told them of the abuses of every kind to which they would be subjected, (verses 17, 18,) and observed that the accomplishment of his views would unavoidably result in a universal exasperation and dissension, which should even disturb the peace of families, and sever the tenderest connections, (verses 34—36.) Had Jesus had no other object before him than the improvement of the prevailing religion, could he have anticipated such dangerous commotions, and spoken of them beforehand? The labors of John the Baptist did not disturb the public tranquillity, for he undertook nothing in opposition to the established constitution. Now, if Jesus, as the result of what he intended to accomplish, looked forward to a dissolution of all former relations, and a state of war between all parts of society, must he not have intended to go much farther than John did? Must he not have purposed the actual overthrow of the regulations then in existence? There is something remarkable in the manner in which, on every occasion, he explained those commandments of the law of Moses, which related to the *external service of God*, and made up a great part of the Jewish constitution. Nothing was more sacred in the estimation of a Jew than sacrifice. Jesus never intimated that a man should offer sacrifice, but he often censured the abuses, which, to the prejudice of morality, had crept into the service, (Matt. xv. 5, 6; Mark vii. 11, 12,) and, with feelings of marked approbation, told a learned man who had asserted love to God and man to be of more value than ‘all whole burnt offerings,’ that he was not far from the kingdom of God, (Mark xii. 34.)”

From the discourses of Christ, recorded by the evangelists,

two things are most evident. First, he makes it the duty of his friends, in their future efforts for the accomplishment of his purposes, to exercise the most discreet moderation, and the most patient submission, while he informs them of the oppressions they must suffer in the conflicts about to ensue. Violent movements would surely result from the blind religious zeal of the Jews and pagans, and their opposition to the promulgation of his doctrines ; but the welfare, demanding the fortitude and sacrifice of his disciples, was to be strictly moral, not political. Thus they understood him ; for none were more willing to act the part of good subjects, and comply even with unjust regulations, than they. Hence we learn from Tertullian, that, for the first three centuries of the Christian era, though they were numerous, and might easily have done so, not one instance can be found in which Christians ever opposed power with power, or took up arms against the inhuman tyrants by whom they were often most cruelly persecuted.

The second truth to which we referred is, that, while Christ inculcated moderation and the spirit of self-sacrifice upon his friends, he enforced upon them most strongly the duty of boldly avowing their real sentiments, and if they perished from earth as the consequence, they should be abundantly rewarded with himself in heaven. On this point, a German author has well arranged Christ's own words : "In more than one instance, his very expressions are of such a character as directly to contradict the idea that he operated by means of private institutions. He told his friends, explicitly, that they should resemble a city set on a high hill, which, on account of its position, cannot be hid ; that they should be a light for illuminating the whole world ; and ought never to think of keeping any thing secret. Matt. v. 13, 16. He announced to them, in plain terms, that the extension of his doctrines would excite great commotions, and draw down severe persecutions upon his friends. Matt. x. 21—32. Had it been his intention to advance his object by secret springs, he must have charged

his apostles to avoid all public curiosity, and shun the very appearance of general movements. Instead of doing so, however, and making it their duty to maintain a suspicious reserve and operate in secret, he commanded them to teach every thing that he had delivered to them, with boldness, and preach what he had told them in the ear, upon the house-top. Matt. x. 26, 27. Stronger expressions could not well have been employed for showing that he wished them to act with perfect frankness, and avoid every thing like mystery. Of the same character is all the instruction which Jesus imparted to his apostles, in his last familiar discourses with them, (John xiv.—xvi.,) respecting the manner in which they were to labor for the accomplishment of his object after his death. They were to do every thing in public, and without a shrinking reserve. They were not to hesitate, should they be complained of, persecuted, and oppressed, for their candid and open efforts. They were to remember that his frankness of action had drawn down upon him the same fate, (John xv. 18—21,) and that the object before them was to effect a radical improvement, which could not be done without great public commotion, (John xvi. 8—11.) It appears even that Jesus intended expressly to guard his followers and friends against being entangled with societies, in which he referred to something secret and mysterious. The admonition which he is known to have given them against believing any, who, during the last calamitous times of the Jewish state, should try to persuade them that Christ was here or there, was in the desert or in the secret places, (Matt. xxiv. 23—26,) can have no other meaning. His object undoubtedly was to make his followers suspicious of all secret institutions, notwithstanding they promised great things and excited seducing hopes. Finally, the declaration which Jesus made, respecting himself, before Annas the high priest, when interrogated as to his disciples and doctrines, is worthy of particular attention. Jesus told him, in the strongest terms, that he had never labored in a corner, nor taught nor attempted any thing in secret; that he

had delivered his instructions in the synagogues and the temple, where all could hear him, and hence, that people were to be found in every place, who were well acquainted with whatever he had said or done. John xviii. 19—21."

Christ came to teach mankind at large "the art divine which heals each lurking ill." He opened the most copious sources of lofty thought and enraptured emotion; taught the clearest and most salutary truths; relieved the heaviest woes; benefited the greatest numbers, encountered the fiercest hatreds, and foremost fell the fairest victim of tyranny in the sublime crisis when

"He seized our dreadful right; the load sustained,  
And heaved the mountain from the guilty world."

Secondly, against every form of injustice, Christianity is the mightiest antagonist. The disciples of the great Redeemer are never to forget that the spiritual sword given for their use must not be laid aside so long as truth is discarded or corruptions endure. Theirs is a great and holy work, incalculable in its results through innumerable generations: but it is also a labor of toil and sorrow, a work for which human sagacity and earthly strength are insufficient; an enterprise the most divine, but which can be accomplished only by resources perpetually derived from God. It is only when thus equipped, that men can resist the storms of life, and the potency of persecuting falsehood, feeling that a sure foundation is laid whereon faith is to stand and build, beside which no other basis can subsist. The one is everlasting rock, the other transient sand. The spirit of all grace sends its recipient first to Christ, the only true Teacher and Lawgiver, and thence perpetually forward to Christ the Redeemer and Reconciler; to him who not only says, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," but goes even unto death under the pure impulse of divine love, and sheds his blood that all the world may have a pledge of the divine mercy. All who have actually received

into their mind and heart this new treaty of peace with God, will earnestly desire to see it every where established; that man, abandoning all idea of merit in his own imperfect works, may surrender himself wholly to divine love as manifested in Christ, and receive in return that strength of heroic consecration, that joys in all the struggles of merciful justice, and which waits not for commands, but *does*, before the order is formally issued, and, if possible, *more* than its letter enjoins. This mastery

“Means but communion, the power to quit  
Life’s little globule here, and coalesce  
With the great mass about us.”

The spirit of Christ is preëminently the spirit of sacrifice, and this, wherever found, or in what manner soever it may be manifested, is always a spirit of illumination. It is born of might immortal, a spirit kindred with the angels; and neither sky, nor night, nor earth, nor all the powers of darkness combined, can extinguish its vision or foreclose its final triumph. No one, however lowly his lot, can be entirely wanting in knowledge or strength, who is capable of irradiating his earthly path with the light of divine self-renouncement; and this Christianity in its most lowly votaries is sure to do. Participants of the power of the cross become mighty in obedience; each one labors for the common weal, and he who was at first full of infantile weakness, soon grows into manly, even colossal proportions with whole nations in his mind. His soul is such a harmony of light and heat, such a union of thought and courage with love, that he has a heart with room for every sorrow and joy of humanity, and in the end irresistibly triumphs, however formidable the obstacles that may be arrayed against it; triumphs not because it is thought, not because it is courage, but because it is love, that love which waters cannot quench nor floods drown.

The good, the true, and the lovely, components of all

excellence, form an harmonious unity in God, and a harmonious unity in the universe ; and Christianity, in its ultimate development, would constitute the same harmonious unity in man, in all mankind. This is the divine ideal which man, a perfectible being, from one radiant height of excellence to another, is urged onward to attain. In reference to this sublime end, every era of persecution that has yet smitten our race with fierce and blasting breath, has been a divine necessity subordinated to progressive emancipation, and has thus accomplished purposes the most divine. Born in Bethlehem, tempted in the wilderness, sweating agony in the garden, bleeding on Calvary, bursting victorious from the confines of death and hell, holy love sacrificing its dearest treasures on behalf of Adam's fallen family, has ever kindled its beneficent flame to consume rising oppressions, and to serve as a torch to pioneer auspiciously a perpetual progress towards the purer light of loftier worlds. In every past age, the moral heroes who through a divine growth approximated divine perfections, prophesied that a period would arrive when all men would attain this desired consummation by similar means. Upborne by that hope which is the anchor of faith, they persevered in their glorious enterprise, till the weary and mangled springs of life were compelled to stand still ; but, before ascending to reap the fields of immortality, they bequeathed to their successors here below an example blissful and beautiful, which we are to imitate as the only means of attaining loveliness, and joy of soul which shall never fade. They were the sages who became perpetual redeemers by lofty ideas and lowly deeds, and who fought their toilsome way step by step, through the process necessary to be traversed by all who would supplant the manifold sophistries, superstitions, and cruelties that meet us on every hand. They trod the heavenly paths which lead and lure souls to the most salubrious heights, making the feet free and swift with loving alacrity that do tread in them. Impelled by this spirit, and panting to achieve the greatest amount of good, the disciple stretches his strength unto its greatest limits

on behalf of the greatest number; in reaching upward for richer fruit to feed the famished multitudes beneath, he loftier grows, and in reaching outward to distribute blessings among the most remote, he larger, holier, more resplendent grows. To develop himself in beneficent actions as practical as they are diversified, and to live only for the general good, is the master purpose of his heart, his hope, his nature's sum and end. Born of God, it is his perpetual luxury to feel inflamed with godlike aspirations; to glow within himself, like a fire-opal, and to shine abroad with influences more ardent and enduring than the stars — the most potent heat and pervading light, even like the sun, "God's crest upon his azure shield, the heavens." Love, holy and all-embracing, which is the soul and life of true Christians, they pour abroad cloudlike, to freshen and render fruitful every parched heart, which lonely and arid nook of immortality, thus refreshed and made verdant from life-seeds beneficently vitalized, becomes in turn the loveliest scene blooming beneath mortal skies, the fairest flower of the world's garden,—

"So sweet and pure,  
That it might freshen even the fadeless wreaths  
"Twined round the golden harps of those in heaven."

The power and purpose of Christianity were foretold by Isaiah when he declared, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." And again, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." And who is he who reopens every closed gateway, levels all obstructions, breaks all bonds, and blesses all mankind? Ah, prophecy and history both tell us, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." It is he, the crownless Monarch of all free spirits, himself the most divinely invested with unostentatious freedom, save when



the world forces upon him its bloody regal robes ; this is the champion of humanity, who opens every salutary path, and revolutionizes every pernicious institution. Long anterior to his advent, he cried to the world through the evangelical prophet, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." Science could not enter ; power could not enter ; Nineveh, Babylon, Alexandria, Grecian genius and Roman force could not enter ; but the Son of man, mounted upon the foal of an ass, the Maker of the universe, clothed in our nature, and borne by the most lowly animal of earth, will enter, has entered, and will pass on, bearing forward humanity in its ascending progress forever. It is Christian truth that imparts fortitude to traverse deserts, scale mountains, and encounter the most terrific storms for the good of mankind. The missionary departs, knowing very well that he has but a few years or months to live ; but the truth he proclaims is eternal, and this truth he knows will repay him infinitely beyond the measure of time and ease he has sacrificed. Their goodness of head and heart is not a mere abstraction, but a beatitude practically exemplified in deeds of peacefulness and kindness toward all their associates in a common strife. Their faith sweeps the future like a glass, reads clearly the events of Providence as they come full freighted with unfolding destiny ; and this faith, harmonious with the hands it employs, works incessantly to promote the widest and happiest weal. Thus every child produced and upheld by the God of might, not only loves and lives on beneficent power, but accomplishes the grand end of his existence by subduing moral evils through moral good, and making the highest conquests to be at once the joy and reward of life.

" For every tear by pity shed  
 Upon a fellow-sufferer's head,  
 O, be a crown of glory given ;  
 Such crowns as saints to gain have striven —  
 Such crowns as scraps wear in heaven."

The greatest benefactors of our race have not been those

of illustrious birth, but the humble artificers of a glorious life ; men who, having risen to great truths, the perennial growth of the grandest principles, have held them as a sacred trust for mankind, and have borne witness to them amidst the greatest darkness, in the face of most persecuting scorn, and often being obliged to suffer the most cruel death. But their posthumous influence, like the progressive power of their active life, tends still to diffuse most widely an example that enlightens, and doctrines that redeem. For example, the council of Constance, who had previously burned John Huss, ordered the body of Wickliffe to be dug up and burnt, and his ashes cast into a neighboring stream, which, as Fuller in his Church History quaintly says, "conveyed his ashes into the Avon, Avon into the Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, these into the main ocean ; and thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over." Men of this stamp stand firm and undismayed in times that most severely test the purity and durability of Christian allegiance. They show themselves at all times to be honest and true-hearted, ready to act with firm reliance on the arm that built the pillars of the universe ; and if they are opposed by sanguinary or vindictive laws, they imbibe "a vigor beyond the law," calmly meet and brave the storm, and court the horrors of martyrdom rather than share the infinitely more frightful horrors of recreancy to truth, and treason to the best interests of mankind. They are willing to let ruin bury ruin, while, as the children of light, it is their business to diffuse intelligence on the highest subjects at any cost ; and for this purpose they soar and shine in exalted influences which wing their way through widening space forever, and endure as eagles outlive insects.

That man will surely be venerated, who, if need be, flinches not from becoming a martyr ; who says, under gloomiest auspices, "I will give my voice openly, and do my duty boldly, in spite of greatness, tyranny, and death." But posterity will revere his worth still more if he does not endeavor to involve

others in martyrdom with himself; if, while standing forth most palpable to the peltings of the pitiless storm, he yet pleads for others, that the injury which he defies may be escaped by them, that the weak shall not be crushed because he is strong, and not a spark of hope be extinguished because in his bosom the full, free flame is burning brightly. It is a spirit which responds to the minions of murderous power, as did its Author to his murderers, "If ye seek me, here I am; let these go their way." This self-oblivion and sacrifice for others most of all exalts the character; it blends beautifully with the grandest energies, and makes the most resolute hero tenderly feel toward the timid and helpless, while he himself is superior to all compromise, and goes straight to the direst issues with the boldest decision. These are the "salt of the earth, the virtuous few who season human kind." The puny and selfish potentates of earth may sue for slavedom and win them, but emancipators and benefactors like these will live in perpetually augmented glory, "when tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent." They are true heroes, garlanded with the unwithering flowers of heaven, crowned with sunny jewels, — crystallized tears wept by the blessed on earth in grateful joy, — clad in light derived from the throne of ineffable glory, and girded with the lightnings which scath all injustice and sunder every bond.

"The world must have great minds, even as great spheres  
Or suns, to govern lesser, restless minds,  
While they stand still and burn with life, to keep  
Them in their places, and light and heat them."

It is a sad thing to see the torch which should illumine the altar employed to kindle fagots around the stake, and the soul of the persecutor become as ferocious as the immolation of the victim is devout. But such things have been, and may yet be. Mahomet II. had an Icgolan decapitated for the purpose of giving a painter an idea of life; and many a mad fanatic has exhibited the life of religion in much the same way. But, despite all the manglings Christianity has suffered, she still lives

in the fulness of her beneficent power, teaching all true disciples from the foot of her altars to address hymns to misfortune, exhortations that shall impart vigor to the weary, and pour balm upon every wounded heart. It is the truth as it is in Christ which teaches all whom it can reach that there is no just law against duty; and all persons, youthful, enslaved, or superannuated, may say to every invader on the domain of rights inherent in each soul, as Pius VII. said to Napoleon, "Sire, I can yield to you my goods, but I cannot surrender to you my obligations; I can greatly love you, admire you, even give my life to you, but I cannot yield you my conscience; I can even, O emperor, sacrifice for your sake all earthly things, but not my soul; for my soul is eternity, and eternity is more than God; it is man and God all together." Armed with this courage, the product and glory of the cross, the feeblest woman will say, in unshrinking fortitude, as did the noble victim of the bigoted Edward, —

"My death the Lord may make a way  
To advance his gracious purpose to this land;  
They'll see a delicate, timid woman  
Lay down her cheerful head upon the block,  
As on a silken pillow; when they know  
'Twas Christ that even at that dread hour rebuked  
Weak nature's fears; returning home, they'll kneel,  
And seek that power that turns our death to triumph."

The intelligent and patriotic Christian loves peace, cautiously guards against disorder, most of all men hates anarchy and war. But he at the same time knows that the violent remedy of an hour, though it pain us to the quick, and fearfully exhausts our strength, is better than the perpetual prostration of disease. If the remedy of water or fire, in the most trying yet renovating shapes, is our only resource, let it come. If it is a remedy indeed, surely it must be just and well-timed, a boon greatly to be desired for the rich blessings it will produce. The sluggish fever that has long been latent in the system, oppressing and destroying its best energies, had much better kindle

into a preternatural heat, the first token of a radical cure and the first breath of real health, than collapse into helpless inanity, the presage and commencement of lingering death. This condition of the body politic characterized that period of the Christian church when the divine dispensation of grace and truth seemed to have reached the earth in vain ; a period when superstition and priestcraft debased and intralled the free-born spirit of man, not only causing the whips of tyranny to ring on the backs of their victims, but binding the most cruel and corroding chains on the brain and bosom of the beggared and buffeted populace, trampled on like dogs. The book of life was closed against the humble votary of religion by "destruction's sceptred slaves, and folly's mitred brood," while the volume of nature, by the same bigotry, was interdicted to the adventurous votary of science, and non-subscription to falsehood was punished by the most cruel tortures and death. The darkness of that era has mainly passed away, but there are yet those who would interdict the pages of reason and revelation to the common eye, if they do not forbid philosophy freely to explore the wonders of creation. But Christianity, when allowed to declare the first right and highest obligation of her devotees, insists that human thought, redeemed by the light of revelation and blended with its glorious splendor, shall go forth under the whole canopy of heaven, to proclaim to all mankind the wisdom, power, and goodness, of their Father, God. Such a proclamation is destined to teach every where that the true homage of unshackled hearts has no prescribed locality ; that acceptable worship has no stereotyped form ; and that the gracious Being we adoringly serve fills all space, supplies all the necessities of time, and will cause all who suffer for the truth's sake here to participate with him hereafter in all the glories of eternity. As a fitting support under present hardships, and a cheering preparative to the final fruition on high, Christ ever speaks soothingly to his faithful servants, saying,—

“Think on noble thoughts and deeds  
Ever; count o'er the rosary of truth,  
And practise precepts which are proven wise.  
It matters not, then, what thou fearest. Walk  
Boldly and wisely in that light thou hast;  
There is a hand above will help thee on.”

Says the late Mr. Hamilton, “The convict labor and hireling tasks of the alien and bondman are exchanged for the free-will offerings and affectionate services of a son and a disciple. Reconciled to God, he is reconciled to every thing which comes from God; and, full of the love of Christ, he courts every thing which he can do for Christ. ‘Come, labor, for I rather love thee now. Come, hard work and long work, I am in a mood for you now. Come, trials and crosses, for I can carry you now. Come, death, for I am ready for thee now.’ His relation to Christ has put him in a new relation to every thing else; and the same fountain which has washed the stain from his conscience having washed the scales from his eyes, an inundation of light and of beauty bursts in from the creation around him, which hitherto was to him as much an unknown universe as its Creator was the unknown God; and the boundless inflowings of peaceful images, and happy impressions, and strong consolations, dilate his soul with an elasticity, an enterprise, and courage, as new as they are divine. He has found a Savior, and his soul is happy. The Lord Jesus is his friend; and his spirit, once so frigid, is become a fervent spirit. His new views have made him a new man.” It is the office of Christianity to unite our existence and ambition in the highest sense with the life and purposes of God, not simply by a necessity or a desire, but by an efficacious reality, by the transformation of our being into the splendor of his own. It was comparatively easy for Prometheus to aspire to heaven, and to lay his hand upon the sacred fire; but, to his sorrow, he learned that the flame he coveted burned when stolen. It is other fire, and for yet loftier uses, we desire to possess, and, in the great Mediator, may abundantly obtain. God is light and holiness infinite and impartial: possessing

these treasures, it was no small thing for him to draw near and blend them with the faculties of the feeble, the debased, and the lost. It is no small thing to receive God into our intelligence to enlarge it, into our heart to purify it, and into our senses to regulate their deranged potency and sanctify their irregular use, thus uniting two natures so disproportioned in a blessed oneness eternal and divine. This union, first realized in Christ, and, by the grace of God, reproduced in every true believer, is accompanied by an energetic force, a virtue truly sublime, which is wise to subdue the spirit of man to the spirit of God, without causing the human spirit to lose its personality and freedom in the divine Spirit; which transports the heart of its subject to an impassioned love of the invisible, and there perpetually recreates it with undecaying joys, subjugates carnal desires, emancipates thought, wings the soul redeemed from the lowest degradation, and bears him through unfolding glories to the otherwise inaccessible heights of divinity. This heavenly influence descends graciously on those who receive it and are saved, and on those who reject it and are destroyed. As the dew descends upon the heart of a poisonous flower, the same as where the rosebud bends upon the lily's breast, God also causes goodness and truth to be diffused copiously even on those who most maliciously pervert the blessings they enjoy. Constantly does Christianity woo to herself souls from the remotest sides of our earthly horizon; while, throned serenely and majestically amidst central glories on high, she confirms the doubting, fortifies the feeble, delivers the oppressed, acknowledges the utility of reason without accepting its yoke, enlightens and elevates without annihilating nature, the mother, sister, and daughter of truth, God and man coalesced, impelling with a firm and equal step the generations of mankind toward a brightening future, improved institutions, and everlasting joys.

To render its disciple chaste, humble, fraternal, and apostolic, Christian doctrine has taken its point of support aside from man; it has found it in God. It is in the divine name,

by force of that relationship it has created between him and ourselves, by the efficacy of his precepts and the ordinances connected with pure adoration, that our rebellious spirit is changed into virtuous docility, reanimated, purified, transformed, clothed with the glory of Tabor, and then, being thus armed from head to foot, is cast as a newly-formed hero into the battle of life, feeble yet by nature, but energized with perpetual resources from Omnipotence, incessantly aspiring after the loftiest wisdom, and as perpetually antagonizing with all forms of injustice with the mightiest strength. Such are the causes and consequences of every true conversion. The humility, chastity, love, and all those internal exaltations which result from the transfiguring power of the Holy Spirit, are produced by that fire from heaven's sublimest altar, given to consume all false virtues that oppose; that sacred flame which alone is competent to burn each proud spot and lustful passion from the heart. Without this religion, the key to blissful mansions, and prompter to heroic benevolence, there can be no communion with God, no conquest over injustice on earth, and no sure foundation for heavenly peace. But, under the perfection of its benign sway, humanity will come at length to possess the amplest freedom and the holiest joys. Mightier and more beneficent than Orpheus or Amphion, Christianity, in the ultimate development of truth, the glorious melody of love from her simple and entrancing lyre, will build of our globe a divine Thebes of men, where injustice never wrongs and fetters never bind. Thus to be inspired, guided, sustained, and rewarded, is to live under the protection of Him who made the whole universe at one thought as at a glance, and who infuses much of his own immensities into every true-hearted devotee. In this world they receive a hundred fold, with the infinitely higher destiny guaranteed to them of a final home forever

“Amid the august and never-dying light  
Of constellated spirits, who have gained  
A name in heaven by power of heavenly deeds.”

In the third place, Christianity, which, as we have seen, has



ever been the fairest and foremost victim of tyranny, and the mightiest antagonist to every form of injustice, is the most glorious rewarder of all devotees for her sake sacrificed. Christ glorified martyrdom, and caused it to be the object of profound veneration, when encountered in a just cause. Before the advent of the great Redeemer, the world was incapable of appreciating the pure morality of martyr sacrifice which he taught in every action of his life, and sealed by his death. The brave and yet quiet manner in which this doctrine was inculcated, is as worthy of observation as is its intrinsic worth. Divine precepts teach us to be good, true, and beneficent, without a ceaseless struggle so to appear. The divine example shows us how we ought to burst through all artificial restraints, cumbrous conventional trammels, and cast ourselves with the utmost freedom into the hands of Providence, to live or die, as may be best for human improvement and the glory of God. It is thus that we become divinely qualified for usefulness, and are religious in the highest degree, and yet with a noiseless manifestation, as the sun shines, dew falls, trees and flowers unfold their leaves in spring.

To this grand end, in the first place, Christianity provides adequate means, by bestowing on the devoted disciple the inexhaustible resources of peaceful fortitude. If the heart be enslaved, the soul can never be free. Whatever manacles we may escape beside, with the power of sin still binding us, we but "wear the name of freedom, graven on a heavier chain." It is soul freedom alone that is the mother of valuable thought, making a Christian to be the highest style of man. The true disciples of Christ are the blessed spirits radically and eternally disenthralled, by the mode of their emancipation divinely qualified to act the part of redeemers every where; "and all are slaves beside." It is only when we are calm that we can see clearly; and, as the double basis of most perfect wisdom and purest bliss, Christ's consummating gift to his followers, were the earnestness of his own untroubled peace. This he knew is most requisite to that perfect freedom of mind, through the develop-

ment of which, in inward reflection, matter and mind are interrogated, the highest knowledge is revealed, and every useful aid is estimated as well as secured. Thus conditioned, the conscience of the understanding keeps itself awake with the moral conscience, and the heroic spirit, at one with God and man, time and eternity, is prepared without dismay to examine self, commune with self, adorns with the highest virtues his internal dwelling-place, makes his own bosom the residence of unsurpassed happiness and the inexhaustible fountain of unlimited benefits. He receives truth into a pure and fearless soul, diffuses light through a transparent medium, sows earth with the seeds of all excellence, and pours on all the distressed solace and salvation mighty and enduring as the eternal throne.

“The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove ;  
Or if a chain, the golden one of love :  
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires :  
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires.”

As vacancy of heart is the source of painful agitation, Christianity comes to refresh and fill it with those gentle affections and generous sentiments which compose and strengthen the understanding, perpetually giving birth to the serene thoughts and beneficent deeds which are the emanations and proofs of celestial purity. The labor of reflection is best facilitated by internal quietude; and hence there have been so few really great minds, because it is rare that we meet with those who are eminently pure of heart. It is only the taught and sanctified of God who can penetrate the meaning of the celebrated oracle of Delphi, “Know thyself;” and they who at the foot of the cross most feel their weakness, will be most filled with power. Thus from our feebleness, experienced and bemoaned, grace educes and confirms the greatest strength; as from the acorn, driven before the wind to root itself in genial soil, springs an oak which the mightiest storm can scarcely bend.

Christian doctrine ever tends to produce the three moral conditions which most of all conspire to develop the best fac-

ulties of the soul: first, the greatest freedom of mind, which, self-acting and self-directing, penetrates every where, seeking more serviceable elements to be moulded into loftier combinations, mightier munitions within as well as without, like the bee, drawing wealth and sweetness from every flower; secondly, that refinement of taste and symmetry of spirit, which lead us to seize upon those relationships which are most natural, comprehensive, and heavenly, in all things seeking the greatest mutual harmony and the greatest general good; thirdly, that energy of character, which collects and concentrates all diversified agencies, and with a divine grandeur of purpose producing an invincible potency, not less majestic than practical, and at every hazard perpetually employed to crush the oppressiveness of infernal wrongs. Without this freedom, which the gospel alone can confer, the spirit of man never reaches that high love it was designed to attain, nor executes the deeds which it is his greatest glory to perform. But under its influence, the sterile intellect and heart are made simultaneously to produce the purest sentiments, which are themselves the strongest motives; as the rock, struck by Moses, satiated the thirst and fortified the limbs of famishing multitudes. All truth as it is in Christ, exactly so far as it is known and felt, becomes a moral force which acts. The best principles may be forever talked about and curiously analyzed without generating in the spectator energy enough to reduce one of them to practice; indeed, this is most frequently seen. But true doctrine is always practical force; it is the *vir* within us; makes the heroical possessor to deserve the inscription cut by the ancients on the pedestal whereon stood the statue of a celebrated benefactor: *Vir, a man!* When the Spartans at Thermopylæ in their hearts prepared themselves to die for the salvation of Greece, they inscribed upon the overhanging crags of the famous pass these words: "Traveller, go tell Sparta that we lie dead here in obedience to her sacred laws." Then, embracing each other for the last time, and binding garlands of young branches around their brows as ready sacrifices

on the altar of freedom, they rushed to universal immolation, exclaiming, "Rocks, fields, and mountains, ye will remain!" They died to leave the domain of freedom behind; and why should they fear death standing in front? A messenger from Marathon, mangled and exhausted with the battle, the result of which he was despatched to proclaim in Athens, ran cheerfully till the last throbbings of strength were spent, and fell at the foot of his country's altar, crying, with death-struck lips yet quivering in extatic joy, "Victory!" Such is the spirit of unflinching fortitude, which Christianity, in forms infinitely nobler than these, tends constantly to generate and employ.

We said above, that, in teaching martyr-morality, Christ bestowed on his disciples the divinest peace, as the chief cause and support of persisting endurance in his service. We proceed to remark, secondly, that he at the same time showed how we are best employed when we are obliged to incur the most trying sacrifice in giving the highest and widest freedom to mankind. All mind is created for improvement through instruction; hence education is a *universal want*. The soul of man forever pants after this invaluable boon; his faculties of thought and will are fitted for nothing else. When a child is born, under any meridian, with whatever hue, a mightier result is produced than the formation of worlds. These see not their own light, feel not their own grandeur, and must soon perish. But the soul is immortal, and will eternally glow with inextinguishable and constantly augmented emotions of weal or woe. As in the incipient process of primitive creation God said, "Let there be light," and moulded the universe amid increasing splendors, so around the latent germs of every rational creature, stamped with his image, endowed for eternity, God, in all his works, in all his word, with the full almightiness of his spirit, cries, "Let there be light!"—let this mind be matured in symmetry, purity, and strength, to fly like a seraph toward heaven. Naturalists tell us that if a bird's beak is tied and his wings are broken, he can still live and breathe through the broken bones; but in the name of humanity we beg, give

the bird an open mouth, give him unmutilated wings, to sing his free song and fly an exalted flight, as the God of love designed.

The human mind every where, groping along the entrance path to immortality, responds to the highest questionings, like poor blind Bartimeus, "Lord, that I may receive sight!" Education is like the sword of Goliath, concerning which David said to Abimelech, "There is none like that; give it to me." Every mind, in every place, to some extent feels this want. Many of the benighted feel it acutely, and pray, with the rugged warrior encompassed by preternatural night, —

"Disperse this cloud, the light of heaven restore;  
Give me to see, and I will ask no more."

As education is man's greatest want, our Savior gave the strongest emphasis to his parting command, "Go teach!" When the down-trodden are visited in mercy, and by beneficent instruction are made to partake of the more than nectarian sweets of knowledge, the stimulated and enraptured soul exclaims, like Homer's giant, quaffing from the goblets of Ulysses, "More, give me more!"

That which the nature of the soul and the results of sin constitute a universal want, Christianity makes a universal duty and right. As I am born with the want, so I inherit the right. That which corresponds with my first and greatest necessity is education; that which I and all men inherit as the first privilege to be enjoyed, is the right of receiving and imparting instruction. The tyrant of antiquity who ordered the tables of the law to be hung so high that they could not be read, and then punished with severity the offences which resulted from a necessary ignorance, was merciful compared with those who would extinguish all improvement, and yet hold their victims accountable for their degradation.

It is by being taught fully in the elements of political and moral justice that man is rendered competent to judge and act for himself. And this is clearly an inalienable right; else why

that natural impatience of control, that admiration for those who sacrifice themselves at the altar of liberty, which all feel, and which would be useless passions, and without any correspondent aim, had not God made us for self-government. More than this, the divinest qualities we possess constitute but an incredible artifice of Nature to reduce us from the path of legitimate obedience, and subject us to the accumulated evils of the worst tyranny, if soul development be not our first privilege, and free action the ground of our eternal doom. Each mortal, through the healthful exercise of all his physical and intellectual powers, is to be made conscious of immortality, and that he has been already crowned with a portion of that sovereignty which was conquered for the world by Emanuel, who poured out his soul unto death, that in the vicarious sacrifice he might breathe a vital air through all our faculties, regenerate the depraved, enlighten the benighted, and raise the dead. Such is Christianity; it creates liberty, equality, fraternity, as its legitimate fruit, and is by necessity destructive to tyranny of every type and degree. It brings into view the multitudes so long obscured and savagely oppressed, softens their revenge, moderates their counsels, and ennobles their action. It is divine truth only that can effectually transform the heart, clarify the vision, and rectify the judgment of mankind; and this it does accomplish best, because of all instruction it most clearly shows that whatever is opposed to equality and freedom is impious and abhorrent before our Father in heaven. This was the grand lesson which was announced to all men in Bethlehem, reiterated itself on the lake shore, on the mount, in social joy as well as garden gloom, and was finally consummated on Calvary's cross. Our elder brother is a Savior indeed, a Monarch divine; but never did he bind a faculty or enslave a limb. He lived and died that he might liberate, and was royal only to save.

“The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn;  
In purple he was crucified, not born.”

Freedom desires to be conquered; and it is remarkable that every where, ever since Christ, she has been primarily indebted to the generous efforts of some artisan, always the first to demand, and the first to obtain, her blessings by dying for her. This treasure is of the greatest value when it is obtained for the largest number. The great Redeemer came for this purpose, and found the majority of mankind placed, like an inert base, at the lowest stratum of society, where it was compelled to bear the most cruel weight. It was there, in the lowest depth, and under the greatest burden, that he chose to be born, bleed, and conquer. In thus doing, a religion arose from that abyss of abasement which declares man to be the child of God, the brother of Christ, equal in the order of nature and in that of grace to his oppressors; and this contradiction between sanctimonious professions and social facts, with perpetual and omnipotent force, thank God! shall lead to the redress of social injustice.

The rock in which the cross of Christ was planted was the corner-stone of the first true republic, and eighteen centuries have been placing thereon the broad foundations of freedom for the world. The bleeding sacrifice thence ascending forever proclaims the unity of our race and equality of rights; the boon he won is unlimited, and its full enjoyment must speedily come. The principle of the equality of men before God necessarily gives birth to another, which is but its development, or rather its application, namely, the equality of men among themselves, or social equality; for if there exists, under this relation, an inequality essential and radical relative to privilege, this inequality will render men primarily unequal before God. Religious equality, then, tends to produce, as its consequence and consummation, political and civil equality; excluding all power of man over the rights of his brother man, recognizing his freedom, and revering his native independence.

Christ chose the cross for his standard, and protested against every success of force by the success of sacrifice. The gospel, regulating the rights and duties of all, is elevated to the

power of a universal constitution, which serves to apportion to all legitimate authority, and which, by a beneficent conservatism, preserves from those excesses to which human ambition is perpetually inclined. Under this sovereignty the empire of souls was established in conflict with Roman tyranny, between which and its own peaceful, republican spirit, it is impossible to imagine an antagonism more complete. The Roman empire was based on complete servitude; the empire of souls, on freedom complete. Between the two, to be or not to be was the grand question, which led at once to a conflict both inevitable and most sanguinary. And what munitions could the empire of souls array against the martial empire covered with its armed legions? The forum? It had no foothold therein. The senate? It had not a representative therein. The people? They were chiefly suborned by craft or terrified by force. Speech? Its only eloquence in all the terrors of primitive struggles was silent suffering, self-sacrifice, and rejoicing death. As it had been with the Master, so now was it with his disciples. It was requisite to confess Christ, and then to die for his name's sake; to conquer enforced bondage by the peaceful use of soul-freedom, to rise by falling and conquer by apparent defeat. It seems that to them it had been declared, *If during three centuries you will boldly affirm, I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, who died and is risen!* — if during three centuries you will boldly in every presence declare this, and then die in attestation of the truth, you shall be masters and most free. Such was the result. With a calm brow and undimmed eye, rejoicing in that salvation to promote which they were ready to perish, they willingly embraced the most frightful martyrdom, believing that their sacrifice would emancipate the earth.

Whenever the victim of political or spiritual tyranny cleaves to the cross rather than be recreant to truth and righteousness, like Stephen, he has but to raise his eyes to *see the heavens*



*opened, and the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God;* and their reward will be as substantial as the vision is glorious. Christianity creates true republicans, citizens always ready to sacrifice their own interests for the general well-being; and when she shall have sufficiently accomplished this work in the bosom of humanity, peace and purity will become universal, and all injustice obsolete. The pioneers and founders of this blissful era are all who are the victims of unrighteous power. They are the world-benefactors, who throw out truth, fructified by tears and blood, as it were, at hazard, like the invisible seed sown by the winds of heaven; assured that germs thus planted will grow and increase, and become a great tree, under the shadow of whose branches mankind will ultimately take refuge against all errors and all wrongs.

Sacrifice exacted by integrity is always its own exalted reward, since he whose life is consecrated to suffering for others must necessarily be a participant of the universal felicity which the Deity diffuses, infinitely more than he whose life is a mere pursuit of sensual pleasure. The existence and deeds of such men are bright revelations of omnipotent benevolence and power. This is, in some degree, true of all disciples, but more especially does it apply to the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, who have bravely consecrated their energies to the service of their race. Truly do they resemble God manifest in the flesh. Their example in time is the brightest and their preparation for eternity is the best; for we hold that in the day of final reckoning, the Judge will not so much inquire, *What was your belief?* as, *What was your conduct on earth? What hast thou done? Where are the proofs that thou hast fulfilled a beneficent mission with all thy might?* It will then be seen that all who in every age boldly wore a martyr's crown of thorns, in order that truth and righteousness might acquire comprehensive, pervading, and ennobling sway, thereby won the brightest honors and were destined to the highest thrones.

The countries blessed with the footsteps of such moral

heroes have their deeds associated with the noblest scenery, exertions not merely of chivalric prowess or military talent, but of true patriotism, resistance to tyranny, strife the most hazardous for peace and freedom the most divine. They are champions who appear at fitting intervals, as if Providence especially designed, by the mercifulness and durability of their influence, to remind the world of what is most characteristic of his own eternal throne. They are the foreshadowing of infinite harvests, leave earth much better than they found it, and ascend with scarred brows wreathed in immortal garlands, to participate more fully of that infinite excellence which they exemplified here below. Following and surpassing the greatness of antiquity, Grecian philosophers and Hebrew prophets, the moral heroes of later times, armed with the pen, the living voice and omnipotent press, have sowed most profusely the seeds of intellectual profit and power in the world, scattering them on every hill, plain, and shore. They all contribute to build up that power in the earnest devotee, which, in the unity and utility of its results, corresponds with the magnitude and variety of the costly materials which have contributed toward its erection, and which in turn render him competent to do much toward advancing the world in grace, mercy, and peace. Such men are the architects of the noblest institutions, and the almoners of the richest blessings. They fearlessly confront the darkest terrors, brave the most despotic wills, and in life, as well as in death, are ready, if need be, to glorify God and humanity in the dungeon, on the battle-field, or the scaffold. Between recreancy to principle and the sacrifice of life, it takes them not a second to choose. So long as one warm pulsation of heart remains, they breathe through all ranks of mankind a spirit of life and aspiration, teaching them to rebel against every wrong, and, if necessary, in their sublime career, like themselves to fall, chanting the Marseillaise of the world's march toward the final victories of freedom, civilization, and humanity. When such redeemers are silenced under the axe of tyranny, they fall like stately sacrifices. If con-

demned to the lingering immolation of the prison, their heroic faculties, lofty principles, and indomitable purpose, assert most clearly and widely, in the presence of despotism and of death, the true "MONARCHY OF MAN."

Intellect and affection alone confer dominion to the strong over the weak — not indeed further to enfeeble, but to increase both their happiness and strength. It is a sovereignty that does not cripple, stultify, and degrade its victim, but enlightens, enfranchises, and exalts him, by gently inducing him to open wider the doors of his soul, and let the ethereal tides of thought and feeling roll therein. Christ came to bestow infinite mercies on all; to nourish the thought of the obscurest soul, beautify it, and make it most attractive, —

"As the dissolving warmth of morn may fold  
A half infrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingéd mist,  
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray  
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst."

When flame is smothered in flax, or when lightning wears a chain, such minds may with impunity be bound, or be dissuaded from the discharge of duty through fear. Landor has said that "there is a pause near death when men grow bold toward all things else." With habitual solemnity and invincible fortitude, the true-hearted disciple of Christ will encounter every difficulty, and quail before no foe. If an emergency occurs in which the devotee must empty his veins rather than disgrace his Master's cause, then will he, with calm firmness, say, as did the gladiators to imperial tyrants of old, "They who are about to die salute thee!" and those last words of virtuous heroism shall seal the damnation of accursed oppressors, burning through their miscreant souls in retributive flames inextinguishable, and eternally increased, while the victim of their hellish hate, soaring to the highest firmament of bliss, shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

Thus have we attempted to show that Christianity has ever been the fairest and foremost victim of tyranny, the mightiest antagonist to every form of injustice, and most glorious rewarder of all devotees for her sake sacrificed. In all the foregoing work, it has been our purpose to portray the character and influence of those persons who reproduce, from time to time, and exemplify, that idea of immortal worth which first sprang from the tomb in the Arimathean's garden, in the definiteness of doctrine and tangibility of fact, to reanimate and adorn the whole moral world. Some of its first fruits we have seen and felt; much more of its ultimate glory was indicated in that glorious vision which appeared to the primitive martyr of Christ on the right hand of the Majesty on high, encouraging him, in the midst of the agonies of a violent death by the hands of an enraged multitude, to say, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" and not only thus to resign his soul, but at the same time to pray for his murderers. The same spirit was again displayed in the apostle Paul, when, after a most useful life, he calmly faced the terrors of martyrdom. And here, as the pen inscribes the author's prayer on this page, it shall be that the reader, with the same holy retrospect and anticipation, may exclaim, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

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